

DECEMBER 1954

THE
reading
teacher

Improving Reading in the Content Areas

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Guest Editor FOR THIS ISSUE is Dr. A. Sterl Artley, professor of education and director of the Child Study Clinic at the University of Missouri. Dr. Artley is a life-long student of the teaching of reading and we are indeed fortunate in having his services in planning the five articles on the improvement of reading in the content areas, the feature theme for this issue of the magazine.

Dr. Artley received his bachelor of arts and master of education degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. His doctorate, in the field of reading, was completed at the Pennsylvania State University, where he later supervised the reading clinic for two years before going to his present position.

The Guest Editor has written extensively for national professional magazines. His latest book is a guide for parents whose children are learning to read. It is entitled "How Your Child Learns to Read." Although the book is written for parents, it is of educational value to teachers. As is well known, Dr. Artley is co-author of a widely used series of basal readers.

Dr. Artley has secured five experts to write on the various phases of this important phase of reading instruction. The articles pertain to all grades of the elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. High school teachers should find them especially helpful.

In addition to the ones on the theme four articles of general interest also are included. Dr. Walter B. Barbe and Mrs. Myrtle S. Dye have written a very practical description of the experience approach to the teaching of reading. Our good friend, Dr. Gertrude Hildreth shows practical ways of teaching word meanings to children. Mr. Glenn McCracken shows the excellent results that may be secured through the visual-aids approach to primary reading. An article by Dr. Brenda Lansdown should be of much help to the large number of city teachers who need help in enriching the experiential background of various underprivileged groups of children.

Dr. Helen M. Robinson brings us pertinent findings in teaching comprehension. Dr. Muriel Potter brings us up-to-date in reading instruction, and Miss Nancy Larrick shows us where we can get children's books for book fairs and exhibits.

We hear so much about developmental reading today. Many think that the answer to many of our reading problems lies in this plan of organization. Dr. Paul Witty, of Northwestern University, is Guest Editor for the February issue, which will deal with this aspect of reading instruction. Dr. Witty needs no introduction to the teachers of America. He is one of the best qualified persons in the United States and Canada in the field of reading instruction, not to mention many of his other specialities, such as television education, education of the gifted child, and others for which he is well known. Be on the lookout for a series of excellent articles to come from Dr. Witty and his writers.

J. ALLEN FIGUREL, Editor

And Now . . .

To Introduce the Feature Theme:

Improving Reading in the Content Areas

A SOUND READING PROGRAM, whether on primary, elementary, or secondary levels, makes several approaches to the promotion of continuous reading growth. The first approach should be through the developmental reading program, designed to promote growth in reading as a process, and through reading as a means to wholesome personal and social development. Though we usually think of this as the basal reading program it makes a real contribution to reading in all of the content areas, since it assumes the responsibility for developing those abilities and understandings that are general or common to the reading of all types of materials.

The second approach is through the corrective or remedial program. This program is designed for those who present special learning problems, or whose reading needs are such that it is difficult, if not impossible, to care for them in the regular classroom.

The third approach to a sound program is the one with which we are primarily concerned in this issue of the magazine—the content areas. It is in social studies, literature, science, and mathematics as well as other areas requiring reading that the generalized abilities and understandings developed in the basal program are applied to particular types of content. It is in this program that the abilities and understandings that are unique to each subject field are developed. Thus every teacher in the school, on each level of instruction, is responsible for promoting reading growth. No longer can the job be considered solely the responsibility of the elementary reading teacher or the junior high school English teacher.

For a discussion of reading in the content areas we turn to several recognized authorities. Dr. Leo Fay examines the research studies and draws from them findings that help structure our thinking. Dr. Gleamon Cansler discusses readiness for reading in the content areas. He shows that the readiness concept is as pertinent on the upper grade level as it is on the first grade level. Dr. Victor Lohmann considers the development of reading competencies in the content areas from the standpoint of the basal reading program as well as through instruction in each subject matter area. Dr. Russell Stauffer gives an analysis of the perennial question of how we can best meet the increasing range of reading abilities we find in classes of science, geography, and mathematics. But recreatory and related materials as well as factual ones have a place in the content area program, and Dr. Helen Huus writes of what this place should be.

It is our sincere hope that these discussions will throw some light on the various aspects of the problem of teaching reading in the content areas, and at the same time offer some practical suggestions for its improvement.

A. STERL ARTLEY, Guest Editor.

What Research Has to Say About Reading in the Content Areas

by LEO C. FAY

● INDIANA UNIVERSITY

AT ONE TIME nearly everyone assumed that reading was a generalized ability that once learned could be easily transferred and used in any situation that required it. It remained for Judd and Buswell (9), writing in 1922, to point the way toward the consideration of reading as it relates to the various subject areas. During the last 30 years enough opinion has been expressed and research conducted to lead the Committee on Reading of the National Society for the Study of Education (15) to observe that in their judgment "the greatest opportunity for progress in teaching reading during the next decade lies in an intelligent attack on the reading problems that arise in the content fields." This statement of the Committee on Reading can rightfully be considered a challenge to thoughtful teachers who recognize the host of problems related to successful reading in the various subject areas. Fortunately, research findings are now available to give definite help to classroom teachers.

Strong General Reading Ability Is Needed

A number (1, 3, 5, 11, 20) of experimental studies, as well as studies of the relationship between general reading ability and achievement in the various content areas, attest to the importance of a strong basic reading program. Fundamental skills involved

in reading must be learned before those skills can be expected to function in content reading. Lee's study (11) indicated, for example, that before a child in grades four, five, and six could hope to have a chance for success in his content subjects, as they are usually organized and taught, he should have a basic reading ability of at least fourth grade level. *The basic conclusion to be drawn from all these studies is that one of the first steps involved in improving reading in literature or science or history is to build as good a foundation as possible in the basic habits, skills, and abilities in reading.* Nor is such a program appropriate for the elementary grades alone for a number of experiments have demonstrated the importance of continuing the teaching of basic reading skills throughout the secondary years as well.

Specific Skills for Each Area

The second major conclusion to be drawn from the research is that specific skills and patterns of skills are related to successful achievement in the various subject areas. A number of investigators (4, 8, 10, 17, 18) have clearly shown that the nature of reading in one area may differ radically from that in another. So much so in fact, that ability to read well the material of one subject may not be a good predictor of ability to read in

other subjects. These studies which have involved pupils in all grades from third through twelfth lead to the following conclusions of major importance to classroom teachers.

1. At all grade levels above the second, specific instruction should be given for reading in the different content areas. As the child progresses through school and the curriculum content becomes more specialized this need increases.

2. Instruction is most effective when directly related to the work being carried on in the content field in which improvement is desired. Ideally, as topics are studied in science or history or any other area, the problems of reading the appropriate materials would be dealt with. It can not be assumed that merely because the teacher gives an assignment that the children will be able to handle it automatically.

3. Instruction should be concerned with the comprehension abilities specifically related to success in each area. The importance of well defined purposes is emphasized again and again in the related research. Having a well understood reason for reading a selection is one of the best guides a reader has for the efficient reading of a passage. In addition, however, there are unique comprehension problems in the various areas for which special attention is needed.

4. The body of basic ideas and the way of organizing these ideas should be developed. Knowledge in any field is certainly more than the mere collec-

tion of information. Egypt, for example, is more than the Nile, Cairo, The Suez, and the pyramids. These facts are all interrelated to such an extent that real understanding can be based only upon the further knowledge of how these facts fit together. There is some evidence that summary textbooks may foster neglect of these abilities. Much more extensive reading and other contacts (audio-visual aids, field trips, etc.) are also highly important.

5. Word meanings are a major block to successful content reading. Since words are the vehicles for expressing ideas, understanding will invariably suffer if pupils are seriously limited in the specific and technical vocabulary of an area. It is quite revealing at any educational level to ask pupils to define some of the basic terms for the project or topic being studied. It appears that terminology is so much a part of the teacher's background that he is often guilty of assuming that word meanings are obvious and consequently neglects to check them. Studies in arithmetic, social studies, science, and literature all show that power in word meanings is significantly related to successful achievement.

6. Materials are a source of difficulty for the following reasons:

Fact and concept load are often unduly heavy.

Format variations from area to area lead to confusion.

Materials in the content areas are often uninteresting and unappealing to children.

The readability of content materials is often significantly harder than general reading texts.

Authors of content books often assume greater background than children actually possess.

In each area a need exists for carefully fitting materials to children. To do this successfully will call for an understanding of the materials as well as the reading ability and the background of the children. Materials represent an area in which, although much progress has been made, much further work is needed to make more effective use of the better materials now being produced.

7. Individual differences cast a shadow over the entire area of content reading. Researchers have pointed out the importance of differentiated use of materials by means of which problems of differences in basic reading ability may be met. In addition the unit approach to content teaching, which is quite common in the elementary schools, makes possible adjusting to the differing interest patterns of children.

8. A final conclusion to be drawn from the research is that improvement of pupils' reading can best be achieved where the teacher actively attempts to increase his own professional effectiveness through experimentation. Reading research and reviews of research may stimulate a teacher's thinking; however, improvement in reading will take more than thinking about it. Improvement proves to be the result of action on the part of both pupils and teachers.

Direction and Action in the Various Subject Areas— Arithmetic

A number of carefully controlled studies of reading as related to success in arithmetic have been reported in the literature. Two of these rather emphatically reveal the importance of giving special attention to reading skills as they are related to the work being done in arithmetic. Lessenger (12), working with a group of elementary school children, gave special reading instruction for a semester. The range of gain for the semester's work was from one and a half to two years' growth in arithmetic computation. Stright (19) conducted a controlled experiment with high school freshmen with similar results. The control group had algebra five days a week, the experimental group had four days of algebra and spent the fifth day on reading and study skills. The gain of the experimental group over the control group in algebra achievement was significant at the two per cent level of significance. A number of classroom experiments conducted under the author's direction have been able to show gains averaging well over a year in a semester's time by working directly with the reading skills involved in arithmetic. Research indicates that the reading problems to be found in arithmetic are:

1. *Vocabulary.* A twofold problem exists in relation to vocabulary. Arithmetic possesses a technical vocabulary which must be mastered. Secondly, the vocabulary of arithmetic textbooks is not so carefully controlled as that

in basic readers, with the result that children are faced with a greater proportion of strange words.

2. *Abbreviations, symbols and form.* In testing a large group of sixth grade pupils the author found that a change in the symbols and form of a given problem often resulted in a significant change in the difficulty of the problem. For example, changing the conventional multiplication problem

$$\begin{array}{r} 213 \\ \times 65 \\ \hline \end{array} \text{ to: } 213 \text{ times } 65 = ?$$

resulted in well over a ten per cent drop in the group's efficiency in solving the problem. Children should encounter problems in many different forms and should be masters of the symbols and abbreviations used to express the problems in various ways.

3. *Problem solving.* Much could be said of the inadequacy of many arithmetic materials in regard to their problem solving exercises. It is rather difficult for a child to be a clever problem solver when the problems are completely outside the realm of his experiences, or are so briefly stated that it is difficult to visualize them. Positively stated, experimentation has indicated the importance of problem situations that are of significance to children and of problems that are completely enough stated for children to have a chance to understand them.

4. *Adjusting to individual differences.* A search of the literature reveals a minimum of serious consideration being given to this fundamental problem. Classroom experimentation reveals that grouping is just as necessary for arithmetic instruction as for reading.

Social Studies

Studies, of which those by Shores (17) and by Rudolph (16) are typical, present convincing evidence of the need for providing reading instruction in social studies classes if pupils are to be helped to master more adequately the content of the social studies. That this is a desirable goal is evidenced by the findings that the social studies are typically rated as their most disliked subject by upper elementary and high school youth. Research points to some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction as well as ways in which work in the field may be improved. Findings related to reading are:

1. *Complexity of ideas.* Analyses of social studies materials reveal that the social studies are staggering under an almost unbearable load of difficult concepts. A number of factors combine to make the concept load a major block to successful learning. Concepts are presented at too fast a pace, and in an unrelated and sketchy way to children who lack the richness of experience to make sense out of them. Extensive reading, which is an excellent means of adding meaning and substance to concepts may add to the problem unless a sensible restriction is made in the number of topics to be studied. Experimentation reveals that limiting the number of topics and considering them more thoroughly results in greater total achievement.

2. *Vocabulary.* The social studies vocabulary problem is as great as that in any area. The names of people, places, and events fill the pages of

social studies texts. Not only are there many names and terms but, as if to add insult to injury, a large proportion are derived from other languages and cultures which, in turn, add to the problem of pronouncing and learning them. It simply is not safe to assume that words are known without testing the assumption. Vocabulary study is a definite part of effective social studies instruction.

3. *Reading-study skills.* Each of the social studies makes use of rather unique types of materials that call for skill in a variety of reading-study techniques. Much of the success in the experimental studies was related to special work in map reading, reading of charts, graphs and tables, use of reference books, indices, dictionaries, skill in locating, organizing and using information. Such skills can be approached diagnostically with individualized remedial work given where appropriate.

4. *Comprehension skills.* Especially important in social studies are the abilities to skim, to evaluate, and to interpret what is read. The need for

these skills arises especially in those situations where reading goes beyond a single text and where it is necessary for students to locate information, reconcile differences of opinion, and make judgments of what they read.

Science

Classroom experimentation such as that conducted by Pierce (14) reveals that achievement in science can be increased significantly by working with the reading and study skills used with science materials and content. As with social studies, the experimenters found that special instruction should center in vocabulary, symbols, abbreviations, study skills and comprehension skills. Particularly important among the comprehension skills are the ability to note detail, to follow directions, and to relate relevant items.

A final conclusion to be drawn from what research has to say about reading in the content areas is that any classroom teacher can achieve better results in content achievement if he will help his students sharpen their use of the tools of learning—their reading and study skills.

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Readiness for Reading in the Content Areas

by GLEAMON CANSLER

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WHAT DO we think of when the words, "readiness for reading", are mentioned? More likely, we get a mental picture of a first grade teacher carrying on a series of activities designed to enable the children to be successful in their initial reading experiences. Such a mental picture is understandable but it represents a concept of readiness that is much too narrow. It needs to be broadened to include a larger understanding of readiness—one that takes into account all subject matter fields at all grade levels.

Readiness Is Defined

Readiness may also be defined as being prepared for an activity socially, emotionally, mentally, and physically. Such a definition is not specific enough to be of help to an elementary teacher who has thirty-five first grade children in her room who are eagerly expecting to learn to read. Neither is it sufficiently practical for a high school teacher who has 150 different students in her classroom each day.

Psychologists have pointed out repeatedly the importance of readiness for learning. They say that readiness for learning is determined by certain general factors. These factors include the learner's maturation, his background of experience, his attitudes and adjustment, and the relevancy of materials and methods of instruction.

However, none of these factors is of much help to the classroom teacher because readiness for reading must always be considered in terms of specific skills, specific understandings, and specific attitudes. To illustrate, a teacher may get the general impression that a six-year-old child or a tenth grade high school student is physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually mature but upon making a more penetrating appraisal of each of these students' skills, understandings, and attitudes in terms of certain requirements, she may discover that neither one is ready to read a particular content. The six-year-old, in particular, may lack one or more of the following skills: ability to discriminate likenesses and differences in picture and word forms; ability to discriminate likenesses and differences in sounds; ability to follow simple directions; ability to observe consistently from left to right; ability to associate the spoken word with the printed word; ability to read simple pictures in sequence, and so on. On the other hand, the high school student may lack ability to use the card catalog. He may not know that a needed book, for example, is usually listed by author, by title, and by subject. If he does not have the skills necessary to locate information, he cannot be expected to do an effective job of study. Moreover, the teacher may discover

as lacking even more basic readiness skills for reading in the content areas. The student, for example, may not be able to pronounce words—a condition not uncommon among upper grade students. There may be a tendency, on the part of teachers, to shrug their shoulders and say, “Basically, that’s remedial work.” Whether it is called developmental or remedial, does not change the fact that this student is not ready to read in the content areas until he learns the basic skills of word recognition. The immediate task at hand, then, is not the teaching of location skills but the teaching of word-recognition skills.

Since readiness for reading in the content areas must be determined through the use of certain specific criteria, it seems logical to list some of the major skill areas required for this type of reading, and to present some practical questions which the teacher might well use in getting the fundamentals in answer to her question, “Is this student ready for this specific reading job?”

Skill Areas Are Involved

Word Recognition. Is this student able to pronounce words independently? Can he use context clues, structural and phonetic analysis, and the dictionary accurately and effectively enough to pronounce the words that he finds in his reading?

Word Meaning. Is this student able to derive the different meanings of a word? Can he use the context in which the word appears to give him its meaning? Is he able to use the dictionary effectively in selecting the ap-

propriate meaning? Can he use the glossary? Can he use punctuation marks as aids?

Comprehension. Is this student able to fuse separate word meanings so as to comprehend accurately and fully what the author says? Is he able to get the main idea? Is he able to decide what are the supporting details and then to relate them to the main idea?

Organization. Is this reader able to organize what he reads in such a way as to be able to recall what the author says? Can he take notes effectively? Can he summarize what he reads? Can he make outlines? Can he use guides such as the table of contents, chapter headings, sub-headings, footnotes, and so on? Can he make use of signal words such as “first” and “second” and symbols, such as (1) and (2)? Can he use half-signals to aid in uncovering the author’s organization? Here are a few examples of words that point the way:—another fact—*next, then, further, furthermore, moreover, however, but, also, in addition, yet, still, on the other hand, another, finally*; another time—*soon, meanwhile, later, at last, finally*; another place—*there, above, beneath, before, preceding, following, on the other side*; a specific case—*for example, especially, in particular*; a conclusion—*therefore, consequently, for this reason, thus*.

Interpretation and critical thinking. Is this student able to think while he reads? Can he infer hidden meanings? Is he able to sift fact from opinion? Is he able to evaluate and select relevant facts from the irrelevant ones?

Is he able to judge the validity of conclusions? Can he go beyond what the author says and see the intent? Can he evaluate the mood and the setting in which the material was written? Is he able to compare two different points of view on the same topic? Can he reach conclusions on his own?

Rate of reading. Is this student able to vary his rate of reading from slow to rapid, in accordance with his purpose for reading?

Methods of study. Does this student have the ability to vary his strategy for attacking different kinds of assignments? Can he locate and use materials effectively? Does he know how to use both generalized and specialized sources? Can he take notes? Is he able to relate what he already knows to what he is studying?

To summarize, readiness for reading must be determined by analyzing the learner's specific skills, specific understandings, and specific attitudes in light of his maturation, his background of experience, and his emotional stability. Furthermore, readiness is a concept that is as important in Grade V or Grade X as it is in Grade I. Principles of child growth must be recognized.

Ways Are Suggested for Getting Students Ready

Now we are ready to consider ways and means whereby we can get each student ready for reading in the content areas. Two larger ideas come to mind which seem to be sufficiently realistic to help teachers help themselves with their reading problems. First, teachers must honestly re-study

their course objectives, their instructional materials, and their methods in light of the principles of human development; and then, they must realistically place each child on the reading level where he can succeed, and proceed from that point. Second, readiness for reading must be developed as part of a well-worked-out daily lesson.

An adequate background of accurate knowledge of human development is unquestionably essential, for what we know about the way children develop influences what, when, and how we teach. Students of child growth and development have contributed greatly to our understanding of the child in his relation to the reading program. In the area of individual differences their findings are particularly relevant to the topic being discussed. Furthermore, though children are different in many respects, in intelligence we find a close relation to school learning. It is not uncommon to have students in our classrooms with intelligence quotients ranging from eighty and below to one hundred-thirty and above. For some unknown reason, we seem to have the idea that the children who have mental ability below average will "catch up" with the average if they only work hard enough. They can never achieve up to the average of a typical group of children.

Then, too, the range in reading achievement within a given grade is greater than the range in mental ability. In most schools, the children in a single grade show an astonishingly

wide range of reading ability. It is not unusual to find children in the upper elementary grades and in high school who are reading at the primary-grade level while other children in the same classes are superior to average college freshmen or sophomores. These results are typical rather than unusual. On the average, there will be a range of about six grades in reading achievement in any given grade above fourth grade.

In practical terms, how does the fact that children grow at different rates apply to the development of readiness in the various subject matter fields? First, teachers cannot expect to teach all students in one class the same things. Differences in mental ability and backgrounds of experience will make it impossible. Second, because of the many different levels of reading ability within a given grade, teachers will not expect all students to read the same materials. A tenth grade student who is reading on the fourth grade level, for example, cannot read a tenth grade world history textbook. We can no more expect thirty-five tenth grade students to read the same tenth grade book than we can expect that they will all wear the same size shoes. Third, teachers must place each student on the level where he can succeed if he is to grow in reading ability.

When we realistically accept the fact that it is normal for some children to be below average and stop trying to bring them up to an arbitrary grade norm, our mental health will improve and so will the children's.

We must see to it that each child actually makes growth commensurate with his capacity for growth.

Specific Suggestions Are Listed

After having studied our course objectives, our use of materials, and our methods in light of how children grow, we can now turn to specific suggestions for building readiness in a given content area.

Readiness for a given lesson, assignment, or unit of work is handled usually through the introduction. The primary purpose of the introduction is to motivate the students or to capitalize on their already existing motivations so that the activity may be profitably undertaken. In order to assure readiness for a given activity two things must be done. First, vocabulary and concepts which are to be a part of the new work must be introduced and clarified. Second, the child should have clearly defined purposes in mind before study is undertaken.

Since reading is a process of "putting meaning into the printed words in order to get the meaning out," we must make meaningful the words which the students read. Our job, therefore, becomes one of building up experiences behind the words. This is especially true with the technical vocabulary in the various subject fields. Only the teacher in each field will be able to build this technical vocabulary. Words have general meanings and also technical meanings. Some words are more abstract than others, for example, the word *government* is more abstract than the word

horse though *horse* may be an abstract word to a small child. We must teach students to recognize the word in its contextual setting. To illustrate, the word *strike* usually elicits the meaning, "to hit," but its use in baseball doesn't mean to hit at all but to miss. To *strike* up the band means to start. *Wind* and *tears* can be pronounced only from the context in which they appear. It has been said that the word *run* has about one thousand different meanings when used in combination with other words. The most practical way to build a meaningful vocabulary is through the use of context. Other ways for building vocabulary would be through the use of various multi-sensory materials — movies, slides, cartoons, drawings, pictures, bulletin-board displays, etc. The use of audio-visual or multi-sensory materials should always involve teacher preparation, student preparation, and a follow-up or evaluation.

Students tend to forget (1) when what they study doesn't make sense to them; (2) when the goals are not clear; and (3) when they do not have an opportunity to apply what they have learned. Thus, in the introduction of a lesson we must help the students so see the value of what they are studying. Without a doubt, the failure to help children establish clearly defined purposes for reading is one of the greatest weaknesses in teaching today. The student would think his

teacher odd if she were to say to him, "Go out into the hall to get *it* and bring *it* back to me". The student simply would not know what he was to look for. So it is in reading, for teachers have been known to make such pointless assignments as "read from the top of page 124 to the bottom of page 134." This type of assignment is inexcusable. The student must have a well-established motive for reading. Some of the purposes for which students may read are: to get the main idea, to find supporting details, to read between the lines to see the author's intent, to see the author's pattern of organization, to stimulate interest, to evaluate and weigh evidence, to draw conclusions, and so on.

In summary, readiness for reading is a concept that applies to all teachers working on all educational fields. Because of individual differences in learning potentials and backgrounds of understanding all children in a given grade or class will not be ready to undertake the same unit of work with expectation of like success. Adaptations in both content and method must be made if learning is to be effective. But in addition to recognizing the part that individual differences play in instruction, readiness for a given unit of work must be promoted by giving attention to the development of needed concepts and by helping the pupils see clearly the purposes for which they are reading.

How Shall We Develop the Reading Abilities Demanded of the Content Areas?

by VICTOR LOHMANN

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TEACHERS are universally aware of the importance of reading to the processes of learning. A group of thirty-five teachers who had enrolled in a college course in which they were to determine the content, with one exception, chose problems in reading in preference to nine other problems that they had identified. By far, the majority of children referred to general educational clinics for diagnosis are chiefly reading cases. It is unquestionably true that many of our students are unable to attack successfully the reading essentials in the various content areas.

It's the Job of All Teachers

Teachers of history, geography, science, and mathematics find many youngsters in their study groups who fail to make desirable progress because they lack certain reading skills. Until recently, the elementary teacher has been held responsible for the development of whatever reading abilities the child needs. This approach to the problem failed for a number of reasons. We now know that the development of reading competencies is a continuous process and that the youngster can make appreciable gains after his elementary school training, providing that he has proper guidance. We also now recognize that there are certain reading skills which are peculiar to each of the content areas, and

we find that most of these skills can best be attained through proper guidance as the child reads in these areas. Lastly, the elementary school teacher definitely has her hands full in guiding the child to successful attainment of the general reading skills found in the elementary school basic reading curriculum.

We are gradually, therefore, coming to the point of view that the elementary teacher should, to the extent possible, lay the foundation for sound reading as it relates to comprehension, interpretation, and the like, but that the actual responsibility for skilled reading development in the content areas should lie with the instructor of each content area itself. This makes each subject teacher, then, a reading teacher.

Skills and Abilities Involved in the Content Areas

Since reading in the content areas is usually an independent activity, a successful student must have at least five reading skills or abilities. He should be able to identify correctly a high percentage of the running words. Otherwise, reading will be a slow and uninteresting process. Secondly, the successful reader should be able to relate to reality a high percentage of the concepts presented in the written symbols. The learner, in the third place, is expected to be able to identi-

fy the purpose for which he is to read the selection and to proceed appropriately. Further, the learner should be able to adopt an appropriate speed of comprehension in keeping with the purpose for reading. Lastly, the efficient learner should be able to evaluate what he has read and to react to it critically.

Our compulsory education laws are bringing more children to school and keeping them there longer. High school enrollment figures have been increasing and will continue to do so. We are gradually accepting high-school graduation as the minimum for all children in our democracy. This has a good many implications for the teacher in the content areas.

Reading in the content areas begins in earnest in most school systems with the fourth grade. Content teachers will have to recognize from the beginning that a number of students will not have acquired word attack skills sufficiently well by the time they are expected to achieve in these areas. Such deficiency frequently extends on into the junior high levels and occasionally even to the senior high school groups. Remedial, corrective, or extended basal reading instruction seems to be the only answer. High school teachers, as well as intermediate grade teachers, will have to assume the responsibility for teaching word attack skills when they are lacking. They also need to teach the ability to skim, to outline, or to locate information with the various aids which books supply.

Since word calling is not reading, we dare not assume that a reader who

can successfully identify a certain number of words can also understand what he is reading. There are a number of factors inherent in the content areas which influence reading achievement.

The Content Areas Present Special Reading Problems

In the first place, each content area has a vocabulary peculiar to it. The number of new words frequently presented to the reader is unusually large. The reader may be able to handle one or two new words per printed page, but is overwhelmed when the number gets to be five or ten. It, therefore, becomes the responsibility of the teacher in the content area to reserve a portion of his class time for the introduction of new words and their meanings. The same approach applies to new terms or to familiar terms with new meanings peculiar to a particular subject. Such terms should be introduced and explained to students *before* they are asked to read a particular reference independently. Some students will almost always know some of the terms and will be honored to share this information with others in the class. When terms are totally unknown it is imperative for the instructor to introduce them properly.

It is also an acknowledged fact that the vocabulary load of the content area is not only heavier, but that a given new word is repeated less often than a newly introduced word in a basal reader. In the basal reader the child is systematically re-introduced to new words a sufficient number of times so that even the slowest students

can learn the words. This is not true very often in reading assignments in the content areas. Reference materials in the content areas usually introduce a much larger number of facts than do basal readers. Since the student is not only expected to remember the new vocabulary but is also expected to retain the facts introduced, his burden of reading becomes greater. The student is therefore entitled to a specific assignment which will allow him to set up specific purposes for reading. Much better results can be expected if a student is asked to read a chapter in order to discover certain stated ideas or conclusions.

Reading in the content areas is also made more difficult because there is usually more reference to previous knowledge that the student should have learned. The pyramidal approach pre-supposes previous achievements. Should they be lacking, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to supply an opportunity for make-up work.

In the language arts the student is also frequently confronted with many figures of speech and literary allusions. The teacher in this area may have to spend considerable time in teaching children how to identify them and to understand their true meaning.

It should be quite apparent by this time that a student may have appropriate word attack skills and may understand the various purposes for which one can read without being able to succeed as he should in the content areas.

It is of course assumed that subject

teachers will no longer set up uniform standards to be met by all students. Teachers today know that at the fifth grade level, for example, there may be as many levels of reading as seven, and that when youngsters get to high school, there may be even more represented. It is no wonder, then, that those few teachers who still cling to the "one textbook" idea and expect all youngsters to achieve by reading at one level, complain about the reading abilities of some of their students. The teacher who knows her group and differentiates her program in keeping with individual differences will provide a variety of reading materials for the various units taught so that lower level readers will not be overwhelmed by the vocabulary of difficult books, and that the more advanced readers will be able to read materials more stimulating and challenging to them. Cumulative records and present methods of diagnosis make it possible to gauge the successful reading level for every child in every class. This is the first step in planning a good reading program.

It was mentioned earlier that students are expected to vary their rate of reading according to purpose. Since speed is not stressed with students until somewhat later than the introduction of word attack skills, there are a number of students who never get past the word-by-word stage of reading. Some students are even entering college today with a rate no faster than 175 words per minute. This is equivalent, approximately, to the average speaking rate of an indi-

vidual. To keep up with reading assignments in the content areas, students need a much more accelerated rate. Showing them how to group words into comprehension units and using with them certain inexpensive machines on the market which force faster reading, will frequently produce an accelerated increase in rate. It is not unusual for students with proper instruction to be able to increase their speed fifty, seventy-five, or even one hundred per cent. It seems essential today that students have a reasonable speed of comprehension.

Several Approaches Needed

People who have studied the situation are in agreement that there is no one solution to the problem of developing appropriate reading abilities demanded in the content areas. In addition to the previous approaches it has been suggested that teacher-training institutions require every teacher to register for courses in the teaching of reading. On some campuses courses in the teaching of reading are mandatory for all who major in elementary education and English. There is just as much justification in requiring such courses to be taken by all majors in social studies, science, and the other content areas. Too many times the content area teacher refuses to attack the problem because he says he isn't trained to do this kind of work. Though this occasionally represents a faulty philosophy on his part, it frequently means that he hasn't had the

proper training for the job.

It has also been suggested that unified classrooms at the junior high school level would help solve the problem. Having one teacher responsible for the total child makes it possible for this teacher to know the students better and to be able to provide more effectively for the various reading abilities that need to be developed. Recent reports indicate a definite trend toward unified classrooms.

It would appear then, that we need to attack the problem of developing reading abilities demanded of the content areas from a number of angles. Content teachers need to be fully aware of the competencies usually developed at the elementary level. They also need to accept the fact that these competencies will not necessarily provide the students with all of the training that they need in order to read successfully all the materials involved in study. The intermediate grade teacher should start the process of teaching children how to read geography, how to read history, how to read science, and how to read mathematical problems. The skills initiated in these intermediate grades, however, are not fully acquired with entrance to high school or even college. The process of development is continuous and all teachers need constantly to appraise the status of each child and make definite plans to increase the reading abilities demanded of him in each content area.

Making Provision for the Varying Levels of Reading Ability Within the Content Areas

by RUSSELL G. STAUFFER

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INVARIABLY when teachers get together to talk about how they can improve teaching and learning, the discussion focuses on the teaching of reading. Then, when reading instruction has been considered, the next big question is: "How can we differentiate instruction in the content areas?" It is most appropriate that these two requests for help should come up either simultaneously or in sequence, since both are concerned with the teaching of reading and since an understanding of how reading is taught is essential to all instruction.

More and more, teachers are beginning to appreciate some of the basic concepts of teaching that have been so frequently declared that they have become clichés. "Every teacher is a reading teacher," "Every teacher is a teacher of children," "Every teacher directs learning and thinking," "Each teacher should know the concepts and skills needed to understand a particular content area," and so on.

In considering, therefore, the problem of how to make provision for the varying levels of reading ability within the content areas, it is inescapable that some of the understandings which might be considered commonplace need to be reviewed. This may be helpful since frequently it is the so-called commonplace that is overlooked. Hence, some of the basic un-

derstandings essential to differentiation of instruction, even though common, are listed briefly under different areas in the discussion that follows.

Reading Defined

Reading is a mental process.

The reader must reconstruct the experience behind the language used by the author.

The reader can not reconstruct experiences which he has not previously constructed. Yet, at the same time, reading is a means of extending experience.

Reading is intimately bound up with learning and thinking.

Reading is a process of getting and perfecting meaning through printed symbols.

Certain types of reading include the features characteristic of reasoning.

Accomplishing skill in word recognition is important but is secondary to getting meaning.

Meanings are related to printed words in about the same way that they are related to spoken words.

In other words, it is evident from these statements that the most important outcome of reading is understanding. To get meaning the reader must have rich experiences, ability to use language, and ability to think. Since reading and thinking are almost

synonymous terms, the skills that result in good thinking are also useful in good reading.

Individual Differences

In a typical grade, one can expect great differences in general reading ability. For example, in a typical fourth grade, the reading abilities may range from as low as first-reader level ability to as high as eighth-reader level ability.

Similar variability and overlap are characteristic of the mental ages of the pupils of a grade.

All tests of individual differences show that there is no such person as a "fourth-grade child." About the only thing that can be said about fourth-grade children which identifies all of them is that they are approximately nine years old.

Good teaching increases individual differences. Children do not become more alike in the hands of a good teacher.

Even where the best teaching is done, the range of differences among pupils at any one grade level is as large as that described above. However, the median scores for such a grade may be higher than for a less ably taught grade.

Reading disability can be easily detected and is readily apparent even in the primary grades. Special help should be obtained early.

The correlation between intelligence and reading ability is about .60. While this is a positive correlation, it is not high.

Intelligence test scores predict reading ability with a reasonable degree

of accuracy only at the lower levels of ability.

Success in reading is influenced tremendously by interest, background of experience, and skillful teaching.

These ideas suggest that the teacher in the content areas can not expect all children to achieve the same degree of understanding and skill. She must give up the idea of equal achievement by all and at the same time give up the idea that all students can read and profit from the same book. Since the great variation of individual differences is typical of all children grouped into grades, the teacher should accept this as a normal situation and start from there rather than labor under the false notion that she can get all the children to produce at the same level. Once this notion has been abandoned, the teacher can concentrate on determining and understanding the various levels of competency of the pupils in her grade. Constantly as she teaches she will study and observe the performance of the children. In doing so, she can frequently discover weaknesses and inadequacies in skill and understanding before the accumulated effect has resulted in failure. She will always keep in mind that the reader's ability is determined almost as much by his experiences and interests as it is by his intelligence.

Content Area Textbooks

Ideas or concepts that are new or peculiar to a content area must be taught if they are to be read and understood. The reader must be provided with the background of experi-

ences, ideas, and interests that may lead him to understand the concepts.

Drill on words lifted from the context in which they normally appear does not result in adequate understanding.

Vocabulary usually can not be simplified. A concept cannot be written down.

Many of the ideas presented in content books are so condensed and abstract that intelligent reading is almost impossible.

The number of concepts presented in some textbooks is so large that it is almost impossible to master all of them in the time allotted, even if the child is a very able reader.

Studies have been made of the words that are essential to pupils' understanding in the various content areas. Tests show that these basic terms are not understood and apparently are not appropriately emphasized.

Studies show that the difficulty of vocabulary is not the only item that makes a book difficult to read. Other items such as sentence length, the number of prepositional phrases, the number of first-, second-, and third-person pronouns also greatly influence difficulty.

Publishers as well as authors are giving more attention to writing readable books. They are making sincere attempts at providing necessary details and illustrations essential to getting meaning.

Textbooks and courses of study are presenting materials in a more carefully organized, systematic manner so that basic skills and understandings

are accomplished in sequence. Numerous trade books are now available that are well prepared and deal with special interests and at different levels of difficulty.

These ideas about books need to be kept in mind in selecting and using books. In those situations where attempts are made to fit all the children in a grade into one book, these specifics are not too helpful. However, in those situations where many books are provided, the factors listed should be helpful. The most important facts are: the number of new ideas or concepts that are presented; the extent to which the concepts are essential to the experiences and interests of children; the degree to which the content is organized systematically in proper sequences; and the degree to which necessary and relevant details have been presented.

Reading and Learning

It is doubtful that any book or article will be read with the same degree of understanding by pupils in the same grade who differ widely in reading ability.

A second and a third reading of the same material adds very little to understanding *unless* concepts have been clarified, the reading has been motivated, and purposes for reading have been established.

Pupils who are interested will read books that are too difficult for them to read with ease and will still get much meaning.

Words can convey meaning only to the degree that they are related to the pupil's experiences.

The concepts of the good reader and thinker are clearer, more accurate, and more adequately organized than are those of the poor reader and thinker.

Purposes or questions declared by the pupil or by the pupil and teacher together greatly influence reading success.

Highly motivated readiness periods in which purposes are declared by the pupils are of greater value to good reading and thinking than assignments and drill.

Reading requires active, purposeful, conjecturing and evaluation that are similar to thinking.

Ideas or concepts cannot be constructed from words alone, but from the reader's experience and his constructive effort.

Verbal memorization or a parroting of an author's exact words is absolutely no guarantee of understanding.

The meaning that is to be given to a word is determined by the context in which it is used and the reader's purpose(s) and experience.

Speed of reading must be subordinated to getting clear, accurate, and well-organized ideas.

The ideas expressed above indicate that reading is closely related to thinking and learning. Therefore, if thinking and learning are to occur, they must be accomplished by efficient teaching in each area. This can best be done by each teacher as she stimulates interest, declares pupil-teacher purposes for reading, provides materials to be read which answer questions, and assists the pupils to evaluate and organize what has been found.

Materials for Wide Reading and Study

Good teaching is more concerned with ideas than with memorizing books.

Numerous books and pamphlets on many subjects which give specific details are currently available.

A pupil who selects specific materials to find answers to specific questions is much more apt to be interested and successful than the pupil who memorizes one text.

The many trade books and periodicals give authentic details, pictures, maps, diagrams; and thus greatly expand the possibility of getting meaning.

Textbooks that are designed to give an outline of a course in organized, systematic fashion serve a useful purpose but are not a substitute for suitable material giving needed details.

Films, recordings, encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases, and bulletins published by government and industry are excellent sources for gaining ideas.

Free materials are so numerous that the listing of them fills a volume.

Periodical literature is abundant and, if wisely selected, is most useful.

Materials are available that give needed details. If they are obtained and wisely used, they do help provide for individual differences, create learner interest, and encourage vigorous search for information on the part of the pupil. At the same time, the use of many materials may have pitfalls, such as being confused by too many details, unwise selection of pertinent details, devoting too much time to lo-

cating and reading materials, and so on.

Reading Retardation

Estimates of the incidence of extreme reading disability requiring clinic help vary from one to five per cent of a typical school population.

The common need of most seriously retarded readers is for word-recognition skills.

Phonetic and structural analysis skills must be taught and cannot be left to incidental learning.

Given appropriate instruction at their level, most of the seriously retarded readers can be taught to read, being limited only by their capacity and experience.

Most retarded readers respond well to good first-teaching and do not require special methods or gadgets.

Children experiencing great difficulty with learning to read can be identified early and given special help.

In a typical school, therefore, it is to be expected that some children will require very special help and should be referred to a clinic or to someone who has specialized in clinical instruction. The majority of the children will, however, respond to good, systematic teaching that is differentiated at their level. Their major need will be in acquiring word-recognition skills. This help can be given as they attack words in any of the content areas and, if given, may become more functional because its usefulness is more readily recognized and appreciated.

School Libraries

The library and the librarian, the

teacher, and the pupils are interdependent members of a team.

Libraries are the laboratories of the school and frequently are labeled curriculum centers.

Libraries not only furnish materials and information but help foster right attitudes about reading and learning.

Using the library helps a child make his own decision about books.

Public libraries, bookmobiles, and school libraries provide source material for classroom libraries.

The library is the central feature of the school.

Librarians as well as teachers have prepared numerous reading lists classifying materials according to interests and readability.

The school library is undoubtedly the center for source material needed to learn, and it may be the center of the social life of the school. Gradually, the value of the library as a means of enriching instruction is being recognized in the elementary school.

Instruction

Situation: A one-textbook classroom, a large class, with very limited library facilities. The two ways by which children take in most of the ideas are by eye or by ear. If you have, therefore, a large class in which each pupil has a copy of the same book, there are two ways in which the pupils can get ideas and understanding from this one book: by reading the book, or by hearing someone read the book. Before the reading or listening is done, purposes for reading and/or listening can be established in a thought-provoking, what-I-know

and do-not-know situation. It is not difficult to raise problems and get children to think. Usually the children's experiences, even though they may be limited, will be sufficient to provide the framework to initiate some question or problem. A prerequisite for all this, of course, is that the teacher must be quite clear about the concepts to be taught and understood.

As the children tell about what they know and do not know, much will be learned about the experiences they have had that will contribute to their understanding of the basic concepts, help others understand as they share experiences orally, and generally stimulate thinking. Then the textbook can be read silently by those who can read. The book can be read orally to those who cannot read. Those pupils who have difficulty reading might follow in their books as the material is being read, even though this may not be considered too sound an approach pedagogically. At least, this practice has the merits of the old "story method" used to teach reading. When the answers provided by the text have been considered, they might be recorded for the poor readers almost in the same fashion that dictated experience stories are obtained in beginning reading instruction. The best readers and writers could serve as recorders for the poor readers. When the poor reader sees his own dictated statements recorded, the likelihood that he will recognize some of the words, especially key words or concepts, is increased. Help in word recognition can be given as the children attempt to recognize their own spoken words

that now appear in print or in writing. In so doing, the children are bridging the gap from their own oral language to printed language. They might then, as in the first grade, illustrate their materials and get additional clues to meaning and word recognition.

The questions that are not answered by the book may be answered by the teacher sharing her knowledge, calling in other teachers, or, in instances, by people from the community. In addition, other aids to learning may be found in newspapers, magazines, pictures, films, and so on. Home libraries may have resource material.

A unit handled in this way may yield many good oral reports, dictated or written statements, models, or drawings. All of this can be appropriately organized under the supervision of the teacher.

Using Several Textbooks

Situation: A two-or-three textbook classroom, with good but limited library facilities. In this situation the class does not need to be dependent upon one textbook in which to find answers. Other textbooks are available, as are other trade books and source materials. However, the textbook may serve as a starting point.

Again, the teacher must be quite sure about what concepts are to be developed and understood. In addition, she needs to know the reading levels of her pupils and the readability levels of the material.

The reading levels of the children can be obtained by using both formal and standardized test results. Informal tests can be readily prepared by choos-

ing selections at different levels in a graded set of texts, and preparing comprehension questions for each selection. Then, each child can be checked individually by reading one selection silently and another orally at each level until the material is too difficult. The mechanics of reading and comprehension can be measured. The usual criteria for successful performance can be used: smooth reading, rate adjusted to purpose, and 75 to 80 per cent comprehension. Standardized tests will also furnish information about the total class level and the general distribution of ability within the class, and will identify the pupils scoring significantly low or high.

Reading levels of material can be obtained either by wise scanning of the material, by applying readability formulas, or by checking publishers' ratings of difficulty. One other very good method is to have the pupils decide whether or not they can read a book.

The next step is to set purposes for reading in a group planning-session. When each child or group knows the questions to which he wants to find answers, the material can be checked and appropriate items selected. To do this may require the help of the librarian as well as the teacher. If additional material is needed, it, too, should be obtained by the pupils.

Since the supply of materials may not be large enough to permit all children to find answers to their questions by reading, it may be necessary to have a group use one or two books or references, and to read and share. Again, oral and written reports or dic-

tated reports can be prepared and presented to a group or to the class. The sharing sessions can be most fruitful if thought of as a time to clarify and extend and refine ideas.

Ideal Classroom

Situation: A classroom with unlimited materials. In this situation an almost individualized approach to reading materials can be made, along with a unit approach to the content to be learned.

As recommended above, again it is important for the teacher to know the concepts that are to be developed, the reading levels of her pupils, and the levels and usefulness of the materials available. Then, when purposes have been established by the class to be accomplished by groups or individuals, the pupils can proceed to find answers almost on their own. This frees the teacher to move about and give help in reading for meaning, in word recognition, in accepting or rejecting information, in organizing, and in preparing reports, either oral or written. If a number of pupils are discovered who need specific skill training, they may be grouped for that purpose.

This approach may bog down if certain pitfalls are not avoided. The content units to be considered should be wisely selected and sequentially planned. To do this, it may be good to follow the system as presented in a course of study or a well-organized text. The concepts and skills to be learned should not be left to incidental learning. The teacher must be an expert organizer and administrator, un-

usually well-informed about the content area in which she is directing learning and, at the same time, sensitive to the interrelatedness of all knowledge. The materials must be chosen wisely and the time for their use wisely planned, or else the pupils may be overwhelmed by the amount of source material available. Then, too, the precautions apparent in the following statement¹ about integrating arithmetic might be carefully considered so that this approach is not too loosely employed as a means of circumventing skill instruction in reading.

"There remains the question of how efficient it is, either from the standpoint of arithmetic or from the standpoint of achievement in other fields, to depend solely upon the development of mathematical concepts and abilities on the spot as they are needed. Is a price paid in other fields when the attack on problems is interrupted while the required arithmetical abilities are being acquired? Is arithmetic learned and retained more readily? Are gaps left among the arithmetical abilities needed in life? Is there any saving of time in the total program? Are abilities likely to be developed to a high level of efficiency under integrated plans alone? Are interest in arithmetic and appreciation of its significance sufficiently fostered? And, most important of all, perhaps, do most teachers have the time and ability to develop competence in arithmetic under an integrated plan alone?

¹Horn, Ernest, "Arithmetic in the Elementary School Curriculum," *The Teaching of Arithmetic*, Chap. II, National Society for the Study of Education, Fiftieth Yearbook, Part II, pp. 17-18. Chicago 37: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1951, pp. 17-18.

"These questions are not rhetorical. They must be asked and answered by anyone who wishes fairly and critically to assess the place of arithmetic in the curriculum."

Instruction of reading in the content areas, then, as in basal reading, good practices demand that the teachers adjust reading materials to the varying levels of their students' reading abilities. It is only by doing this that they can expect their students to learn what they are trying to teach them.

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Local Council News

The Central New Jersey Council attended the Rutgers Conference sponsored by the New Jersey Classroom Teachers. Following the meeting, Dr. Bertha Lawrence, of Trenton Teachers College, and Mrs. Helen Carey Dallolio, author of a reading workbook series, were guests of honor at a luncheon. In November, the council was responsible for a guided tour of the newly opened Somerset Guidance Clinic under the supervision of Dr. William Boutelle, psychiatrist. All the Somerset County Schools will receive free service from this new clinic. Mrs. Alma Liotta, president of this council, is a member of the board of directors of the clinic. Following the tour, the members enjoyed a covered dish supper at the home of one of the members. In November, an I.C.I.R.I. exhibit was held at the New Jersey Education Association Convention in Atlantic City.

The Place of Recreatory and Related Reading in the Content Areas

by HELEN HUUS

● UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

BOOKS, after all, contain only recorded experiences of one kind or another, and reading is the process of acquiring these vicariously. Most people read when they desire experiences they cannot otherwise obtain because of the limitations of time, space, safety, or possibly finance.

In our schools today, however, assigned reading from textbooks is too often the only means by which children acquire experiences which are designed to aid them in becoming worthwhile people. And while vicarious, these are often also lacking in reality. Page-by-page assignments tend to decline into a dull routine which children accept as a necessary evil, then parrot back meaningless textbook phrases in their class discussions and written examinations. It is this very stilted pattern that modern teaching methods are combatting by attempting to make the school experiences of children more lifelike. The emphasis on recreatory and related reading in the school curriculum is one evidence of this attempt.

Recreatory reading as used here includes material usually designated as "children's literature" and selected how-to-do books that perhaps could not be classed as "literature." Specifically omitted are encyclopedias, dictionaries and other reference books, which are more closely related to the skill development program. The con-

tent areas emphasized are social studies and science, with mention made of arithmetic, health, art, and music.

Uses of Recreatory Reading

There are three obvious places where recreatory reading naturally fits into the scheme of teaching: (1) it furnishes a background on which to draw in introducing a new topic; (2) it provides elaboration of the details and development of the concepts only sketchily mentioned in textbooks; and (3) it capitalizes on the child's interest and extends it beyond the immediate classroom situation, perhaps for life. Some practical suggestions for using recreatory reading for these purposes in the content areas are described in subsequent paragraphs.

To Introduce a New Topic

Stories for children which have a social theme or take place in another historical period or geographical setting can be readily used to introduce a new topic in the social studies. Through these books children identify themselves with the characters and really live in that time and place. Just such a story is *The Little House in the Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Eight- and nine-year-olds follow this exciting story and accept Laura as one of them. One teacher read a chapter a day until the children became so interested in pioneer life that a unit

was begun, and the children experienced many of the same things Laura did—making soap, dipping candles, pulling taffy, and trimming a Christmas tree with popcorn, cranberries, and homemade decorations.

The series by Wilder is unusually appropriate, for not only does the family move farther west as the area becomes more thickly populated (thus depicting the gradual expansion of our country), but Laura, meantime, grows up and her changing interests fit the changing interests of children. So each year there is another "Wilder book" to read, long after children's first exposure to pioneer life, and each teacher can draw on this background which the children have acquired through their reading. Children are indeed fortunate that a new edition of these classics has recently been published with illustrations by Garth Williams.

Before children have an understanding of chronology, teachers of the lower grades might read aloud *They Were Strong and Good* by Robert Lawson. This simple picture book shows that his parents and grandparents, though perhaps not famous, were strong and good—typical Americans. Children can discuss their own ancestors and begin to achieve an understanding of the place of *people* in history.

Stories of contemporary times, such as *Little Toot* by Hardie Gramatky, give an interesting introduction to modern city life, just as *Cowboy Small* by Lois Lenski does for another part of our country, and *The Moffats* by Eleanor Estes for family life.

Books might also be used in introducing a science unit. The animal stories by Edith M. Patch, Wilfrid Bronson, or Alice Crew Gall and Fleming Crew will stimulate children to find out more about the creatures of meadow, woods, and pond. The teacher might read *Wagtail* by Gall and Crew in the spring just as children are bringing in frogs' eggs to hatch, or she might try reading *Follow the Sunset* by Herman and Nina Schneider as an introduction to the rotation of the earth in geography. *Television Works Like This* by Jeanne and Robert Bendick will answer some questions, but raise many others, just as *How Big Is Big?* by the Schneiders helps children get some perspective on size, but sets them thinking about other relationships.

Munro Leaf's simple caricatures will catch the interest of children, whether it be his *Arithmetic Can Be Fun*, *Health Can Be Fun*, or *Grammar Can Be Fun*, and the teacher can lead them from there. In any case, there is a wealth of good books to choose from in introducing new topics.

To Provide Additional Detail

Whatever the textbook used, there are details which must of necessity be omitted, yet which would add reality and vividness to the account presented. Teachers should search for children's books which tell in greater detail the stories of historical conquests, social aspirations, scientific inventions, geographical variations, and the many other phases of life with which school children come into contact.

The Door in the Wall by Margue-

rite De Angeli portrays thirteenth century English with a clarity not often found, and also gives inspiration to those who are physically handicapped. The sympathy with which the crippled Robin is portrayed and his ability to rise above his handicap, as well as the delightful illustrations, add greatly to the book. *Adam of the Road* by Elizabeth Janet Gray (for older children) takes place in the same period. Older children will also be anxious to read books like *The Pony Express* by Samuel Hopkins Adams, *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates, or Genevieve Foster's *George Washington's World* and *Abraham Lincoln's World*. These last two books tell what the world was like and who was living in various parts of the world when George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were alive. Both books relate the early childhood experiences of the men discussed and show how their lives were later related to each other to make a great historical adventure story.

Biographies of people like Buffalo Bill, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, (including the humorous *Ben and Me* by Robert Lawson), and Joan d'Arc to mention a few, present more detailed, humanized accounts of the people who created history than any history text can ever do.

Stories of foreign lands, from a simple picturebook like *Pelle's New Suit* by Elsa Beskow or *Children of the North Lights* by Edgar Perin and Ingri D'Aulaire, to *Heidi*, *Hans Brinker*, and Kate Seredy's *The White Stag*, all give children a colorful picture of the country and the period in which

the story takes place. True, the teacher must help interpret, but the facts are there and can be used to supplement the text material.

Another important aspect of social studies is the understanding and appreciation of life in America which children gain through reading and hearing such simple stories as *One Morning in Maine* by Robert McCloskey, or *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton. Children who live in other sections of the country will gain information about everyday life on the coast of Maine, and children everywhere will enjoy the way a city grows up around *The Little House*. Concepts such as these form the beginnings of sociology in the elementary grades.

Perhaps the most outstanding books about contemporary America for middle-grade children are the regional stories by Lois Lenski and the socially-conscious stories of Marguerite De Angeli. Some of the sections of the United States already described in the Lenski series are the Florida Crackers in *Strawberry Girl*, the Oklahoma oil wells in *Boom Town Boy*, bayou country in Louisiana in *Bayou Suzette*, Arkansas tenant farmers in *Cotton in My Sack*, a South Dakota one-room school in *Prairie School*, and most recently, an Iowa farm in *Corn-Farm Boy*. On the other hand, Marguerite De Angeli writes sympathetically about the problems of minority groups—the Quakers in *Thee Hannah*, the Negro in *Bright April*, the Polish in *Up the Hill*, and the Pennsylvania Dutch in *Henner's Lydia* and *Yonie Wondernose*. Yet whatever their back-

ground, her children are real children and her books teach a lesson without undue preaching or piety. Through reading these, children begin to understand the varied elements which have contributed to the vitality of America.

In science too, recreatory reading provides more detail than a textbook may be able to include. The pamphlet series edited by Bertha Parker and published by Row, Peterson and Company deserves special mention, not only for their colorful, accurate illustrations, but for the simplicity and authenticity of text. Though these vary in difficulty, most of them can be used from the primary grades on up because of their many illustrations. And at each level, the more advanced students will find a booklet to challenge them.

Other books which elaborate scientific ideas range from the simple *The Big Show* by Berta and Elmer Hader, which shows how animals and birds got through the winter, to *Who Goes There?*, a book of animal tracks by Dorothy Lathrop, and *Rocks, Rivers, and The Changing Earth*, a beginning geology by Herman and Nina Schneider. In books where animals act like animals, whether they speak or not, children gain insight into the fundamental laws of nature and a chance to look at the world from the animals' point of view. Anyone who has read "Skunks" from *First Lessons in Nature Study* by Edith M. Patch, for example, will have a new respect for this often mistrusted animal.

The biographies by Opal Wheeler

and Sybil Deucher of musicians and artists should certainly be noted. These works include stories of Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, Mozart, Giotto, Millet, and several others. In each book, the childhood of these musicians and artists is described in a very realistic, believable fashion, and those of the musicians include adapted selections from their most popular works, so that the children themselves can play these selections from the great masters.

Books such as those above not only enhance the general meaning by presenting greater detail, but also clarify specific concepts and come more nearly to approximate first-hand experience. The vivid descriptions of the difficulties encountered by pioneers of the Oregon trail are portrayed through children's eyes in *Children of the Covered Wagon* by Mary Jane Carr; the way in which the rider was equipped with the *mochila* for carrying the mail is precisely described in *The Pony Express*; and the days of the American revolution come alive in *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes.

Teachers who know the suitable books which relate to the content of the curriculum can see that these books are made available to children and are being read concurrently with particular units. Individual children can either read selected portions aloud (and some *should* be read aloud, such as Lincoln's delivery of the Gettysburg Address as told in James Daugherty's *Abraham Lincoln*) or tell from their reading the stories and ideas which parallel the textbook assignments.

In this way, all children can gain the feeling of really living in the situation, and what they learn will become an integral part of their personalities. Children come to see that people of long ago or in far off places are human beings, too, with similar faults, hopes, and aspirations.

To Extend Interests

In addition to serving as background or elaborating on details, recreatory reading also provides a readily acceptable means of extending interests and of providing for individual interests and tastes. Children who complete their work or who are always seeking leisure time activities need only to be introduced to the right books by the teacher before they will become absorbed in reading.

In social studies, advanced readers will like books such as Jeanette Eaton's *Leader by Destiny: George Washington, Man and Patriot*, while others read the easier *George Washington* by Edgar Perin and Ingri D'Aulaire, for example.

In science, biographies of great scientists, such as *Mr. Bell Invents the Telephone* by Katherine B. Shippen (one of the popular Lankmark series) give children a better insight into the human qualities of great people and may inspire them to set their goals a little higher. Children who read may become interested in other books by the same author or on the same topic. In either case, their reading interests are being extended and they are acquiring additional informa-

tion and attitudes which the alert teacher can, in turn, capitalize upon in later classwork.

Through all this reading, children are gaining facts and understandings about people and the world; yet there is still another major outcome which should not be ignored: that is the enjoyment of reading for itself alone. This too, is an important aspect of reading, whether it be factual or fictional material. To omit *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, for example, because it has obvious fanciful parts, is to deprive the child of a delightful flight of fancy. What if real farm animals do not talk? If they did, they would probably sound like those in this book. Certainly children will sympathize with Wilbur, the pig, in his loneliness, and will delight in rat Templeton's orgy at the county fair. Or to say that *If I Ran the Zoo* by Dr. Seuss has no place in school is to lose some hilarious moments. Let the fanciful be sprinkled among the realistic for contrast—and fun—so that children develop lasting friends in books and look forward with keen anticipation to their recreatory reading.

Thus through a planned combination of textbooks and library books, teachers are better able to present new material to children, to create vivid, realistic images, and to extend children's interests. As a result, the children will grow in information and understanding, and will acquire permanent habits of leisure reading, besides enjoying school work more than they ever did before.

Getting Acquainted With Words

by GERTRUDE HILDRETH

● BROOKLYN COLLEGE

READING is largely a matter of responding with split-second speed to the precise meanings of words in sentences. The more words you recognize instantly, the wider your span of recognition and the more efficiently you read. How many words have you in your reading stock-pile? How did you gain all this knowledge? How can one's reading vocabulary be increased? All these questions are pertinent to reading instruction all the way from first grade to college.

Learning Principles

A number of important learning principles apply to the development of word mastery in reading.

1. In teaching reading, always remember the purpose for which children are learning words, that is, to *get accurate meanings* from sentences whether reading orally or to one's self. All practice and drill for building basic word-recognition skills should be directed toward this end.

2. Learning words is all bound up with the life and experiences, the wishes, goals and purposes of the individual learner. A word will be easier to learn if it represents something the child knows and enjoys. A word may be difficult merely because it recalls something emotionally disturbing.

3. Reading is a language activity, first, last and all the time. Problems of word recognition are all tied-up

with children's use of words in conversation. Their grasp of word meaning is linked with their understanding of these same words in their own spoken sentences. If we forget this in teaching, even for one reading period, failure may result because difficulties in learning are proportionate to the "distance" between the child's language and that of his reading text. It is a safe conjecture that children know and understand no more of their native tongue than they can *actually speak themselves*. We should keep this fact in mind when acquainting children with their reading words. In all study of reading problem cases, explore thoroughly the child's use and comprehension of his language. In the lacks found there may lie the clue to his disability.

4. Words are easier for a child to learn and remember if he can get the precise meaning in mind so that he can use the idea in his thinking. This point ties up with the foregoing.

5. Learning to read is a conditioning process, analogous to the child's first steps in learning to speak. The familiar speech symbols which were learned through a long process of associating speech symbols with the various ideas represented must now become attached to the new printed graphic word symbols, those little series of black marks on the white paper. Ultimately these printed sym-

bols will "speak" to us just as surely as our parents and friends do. The various parts of the process are storing up visual impressions of the word forms, linking the visual to the oral response and to other clues such as pictures, catching clues to the new or forgotten word in the context of the sentences themselves.

Pronouncing Aids Learning Words

Pronouncing reinforces the conditioning process, helps to impress words on the mind, because our first associations with these same words are oral. If the child uses the word naturally in talking, hears the word pronounced as he looks at it, preferably with an interesting picture alongside, then says the word to himself, with a few repetitions, he should know the word. There is evidence that a child can recall words he has used in conversation and can pronounce them more easily than those he has merely seen the same number of times. Forming these clang-associations (Klang-gestalten as the Germans call them) are invaluable in stocking the child's word bank. How strengthening and heartening it must be for a child to hear his own voice or that of the teacher using these strange new words in a perfectly natural way. This principle of approach to words through pronunciation applies both to short, common words, as well as to the polysyllabic ones.

Pronouncing a word while looking at the printed form is the first step in learning to recognize the word later from *visual clues alone*. After a number of repetitions of this association a glance at the word recalls its meaning

without noticeable vocalizing. Pronouncing a word forces attention to all parts of the word in succession, a decided aid in the discrimination of confusing word pairs.

Here's another advantage of word-pronouncing. It leads right on into sounding. Word-pronunciation finally becomes identified with sounding for clues to new, difficult and longer words. Even a seven-year-old is bright enough to see that familiar words, often repeated, such as *chick*, *chair*, *child*, *choo-choo*, all begin with the same familiar sound. With help from the teacher in making these identifications, he becomes more and more dextrous in sounding "big" words for himself. Here's the beginning of intrinsic phonics, the auditory word-analysis principle. In fact, this is the only approach that will safely transfer for most children to recognition of new and forgotten words.

But won't pronouncing each word form the habit of "word calling" which we know is a meaningless exercise and a slow process? Not necessarily. It would be false to assume that if words are once pronounced they must forever after be orally articulated in the course of reading. Even an eight-year-old soon catches on to the idea that talking out loud while reading is slow stuff. If you want to get on with this exciting story, better look ahead faster and not take time to say every part of every word. A little later he becomes more and more proficient at guessing words from context, so that what was originally a crutch (the pronouncing) can now be discarded. However, during these transition

stages much depends upon how the teacher manages the process, what sorts of materials are used, how much follow-up checking is done, and so on. If the new and hard words come too fast, of course no child short of a genius could make the shift to more effective use of context clues.

Learning to Recognize Words in Context Reading

The "Look and Say" context approach to word recognition is recommended for a number of reasons:

1. The words are always met in a meaningful setting which insures understanding of the meaning each word is intended to have in this particular sentence. Otherwise words other than these would compose the sentence.

2. A linkage is possible with the child's own spoken, conversational language.

3. Ultimately this is the way the child must read. The sooner he begins establishing the particular combination of habits he will need as a mature reader, the more capable he will be in the end. Adage No. 1 of the psychology of learning is that "we learn what we practice and in the way we practice it." If I learn words on cards or in a vertical column that's the way I'll know them best.

Why is it easier to recognize words in reading context than separately, e.g., on a flash card or in a vertical row? Why, simply because the surrounding familiar words supply clues to meaning. One word alongside another greatly enhances the chance of a correct guess at either. I'm reading along about "jumping over an old

fence." Next time I come to "Jumped over old" in this story my best guess at the next word is "fence." How easily a child can remember *bear, rabbit, rooster* in a funny story, especially one that is illuminated with humorous pictures.

Consider the contrast between trying to learn a stock of words in (a) context and (b) in columns, for example:

- (a) *What fun to play in the snow.*
We will play snow ball.
We will make a snow man.
How funny you look, old
snowman!
- (b) *play how make*
man look will
old the fun

Strange as it seems, the individual words even *look different* out of context than inside the sentence. That's the way the mind works in this realm of visual perception.

There is mounting evidence that of 100 words at the child's level of understanding, 70-85 per cent of these words could be recalled after a few exposures with good "look and say" sentences; whereas, probably not more than 20-30 per cent could be retained when taught as "separates." Better just go ahead and say the words as you do in talking, "We will make a snowman." But won't the *slow learner* benefit more from the single word, monadic approach? No, because he has some intelligence and can learn by thinking, too.

For building reading vocabulary the best advice is to go right ahead and read and read without spending too much time on preliminary or acces-

sory activity, but with the sympathetic aid of the teacher always at hand. The pupil should try to get the new word from the context if he can, then he's more apt to recall it next time.

Here's one small point that seems to have escaped notice. Words divided at the end of a line offer difficulties for children that those of us who are mature readers might not suspect. Wouldn't it be a fine thing (though not most economical for the publishers) to print all sentences for children through the third grade, and even higher for the slow learners, without any broken words at the ends of the lines, even though this means coming out with lines of uneven length on most pages. Who will be the first to try it?

Let us remind ourselves at this point that these first "look and say" experiences with reading vocabulary should underscore the *say* part of the phrase; they should be *oral*, in harmony with the ideas about word pronunciation given above. Yes, reading can be taught to children as a wholly visual process without audible vocalizing, but the deaf children also do best when reading and speech are being learned simultaneously; and normal hearing and speaking children are found to vocalize right along in non-oral reading. As someone has said, even breathing and sentence understanding go together! But we thought that pronouncing was chiefly for oral audience reading. No, only in part, because articulated reading is the direct route to mature, independent, silent reading. Before reading, always have conversation based on the text,

then the child can use all intelligence he has in "guessing" at each new word with a high per cent of accuracy.

On to Word Mastery

For mastery, for the necessary "over-learning" that makes for self-confidence, ease and pleasure in the task, the child must meet his new word friends repeatedly in varied context. Otherwise, he has only memorized, and may even "read" his book upside down. Do not underestimate the amount of "look and say" practice that will be needed for learning troublesome words. The children themselves will manage to get plenty of rehearsal if the right material is put in their way.

Some hints for getting the hard words: suggest to the pupil, "Look at the picture. What do you think the word would be?" Ask questions that direct thinking; "What was the rabbit talking about? Where did Mr. Froggie live?" etc.

Check each child's knowledge of every new word in the text, day by day, to make sure that he has *learned each word thoroughly*. Every commonly-used word passed over only partly learned must be paid for later in stumbling, hesitating inaccuracy. However, remember that one day a child may know a word, the next day he may not. This is not necessarily a sign that he is stupid. It happens to all of us getting underway in new skills. Make a note of the words missed and review them later both in and out of context. Watch out for the demon words: *also, when, for, before, almost*, etc. These are relational words repre-

senting abstractions. It is notorious that children and abstractions don't mix well.

Why must every new word be treated as though it were a brand new item? English is full of compound words, e.g., *carload*, *livestock*, *sundial*, *mountainside*; and twenty-five per cent or more of our vocabulary is made up of words derived from common base forms, e.g., *cook*, *cooking*, *cooker*, *cookstove*; *able*, *unable*, *disabled*, *capable*. Require the pupils to do some thinking for themselves when they come to these words. Encourage them to do all the generalizing they possibly can while reading.

In the early stages a child is bound to be a word-by-word, finger-pointing reader. This is evidence of sound sense because he is only at the toddler state. Let him toddle around fearlessly (but stay by and watch), and he'll soon skip and run.

What About Sounding?

Sounding is begun with the natural pronunciation of words in the "look and say" experience. More and more sounding will be needed as the number of new words begins to increase more rapidly. The child who depends on visual clues alone will make numerous errors because of confusing words that look alike on first glance. The mature reader confines sounding largely to the foreparts of words, but when he meets difficulties, finds he has guessed wrong, he backtracks and explores the whole word. The children's sounding experience should be confined to

total, meaningful words; and should be practiced daily in "look and say."

Will tracing help? You can now answer this question for yourself. Definitely "yes" if it means always pronouncing the word before and after tracing, always working with words that are meaningful because the child knows them orally, to begin with, and always trying to read the traced words immediately in "look and say" context. Otherwise this activity is just tracing, not good for anything but "learning to trace."

In all reading activities encourage the child's own effort 150 per cent. Never give help ahead of the time it is needed, nor give more help than needed. Respect the child's request, "Don't help me. I can get it, I want to guess it myself." Why deprive him of a little fun and a valuable learning experience? The young mother who insists on feeding the child because he's messy when he could feed himself, is making the same mistake as the reading teacher who is afraid the child "might make a mistake." Give the pupil time to recall a word. It may recur to him after a moment's reflection, and he is strengthened for knowing the word for sure next time.

These children in our school have lively intelligence, at every turn they demonstrate that they can learn, they are eager to experiment, they like to puzzle things out. If they find they can get some sense out of the activity because they see the meaning in it, they will keep right on learning, and no one can stop them.

We Must Modernize Reading Instruction

by GLENN MCCrackEN, PRINCIPAL

● ARTHUR MCGILL AND HIGHLAND SCHOOLS
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PUBLIC CRITICISM of present educational philosophy and method becomes more and more outspoken. Gray and Iverson report that "in 1949 seven or more articles that were definitely critical of the schools were published in general magazines of large circulation. This number was doubled in 1950 and trebled in 1951."¹ Recently several prominent lay magazines launched a series of articles in which modern public school methodology was the target for bitter denunciation. The profession and growing numbers of the public definitely are at odds regarding the purposes and achievements of present-day education. One of the principal areas under fire is that of reading instruction. While the educators talk about "teaching the whole child," "teaching the child how to live," "improving social confidence," "mental health," and "preparing the pupil for the reading experience (readiness)," lay critics are determined to have the last word in asking, "But why can't you also teach the child to read?"

Evidence Not Convincing to Critics

The teaching profession has replied with vigor to these criticisms. In 1951 at least 30 articles appeared in professional journals in which the educational program was defended. Two of the more recent and most noteworthy

of these articles were written by eminent educators who are recognized authorities in the field of reading instruction. In reading these well-documented reports one is impressed by the efforts of the two authors to show that the achievement level of reading instruction has not deteriorated. There is significance in the fact that the two articles parallel each other in emphasis since the main premise of the one is that "there is no evidence to indicate that we are producing poorer readers now than we did twenty years ago," while the principal claim of the other is that, "reading instruction is as successful today as it was at any period of the past."

It is doubtful whether evidence embraced in such language is going to be very convincing to the critics. The reason is that such unprecedented progress has been achieved in so many other fields and that many of these critics have been a part of that progress. In the profession of medicine, to cite one example, someone recently noted that 90 per cent of the prescriptions doctors write today could not have been compounded even fifteen years ago. In these days of miracle drugs one can scarcely expect the physician to be enthusiastic about his child's reading instruction in the pub-

¹William S. Gray and William J. Iverson, "What Should be the Profession's Attitude Toward Lay Criticism of the Schools?" *The Elementary School Journal*, LIII (September, 1952).

lic school if the best we can report to him is that "reading instruction is of no poorer quality today than it was twenty years ago."

The principal justification offered by most educators for the lack of growth in effectiveness of reading instruction is that, "today we are trying to educate everybody." "More and more children are attending school. Since even the uneducable now go to school the heterogeneity in our school classes has become more and more pronounced." This undoubtedly is true of classes in the secondary schools and it might possibly be admitted as a consideration at the upper-elementary level. But it is difficult to see how heterogeneity can be considered as a factor in the primary grades. In the areas of our country where statistical data are gathered to evaluate reading progress, nearly all children between the ages of six and ten attend school, but this situation is little, if any, different from what it was twenty years ago. In fact, a good case can be made for the contention that children are more teachable now than they were two decades ago. Improved school-health programs and better pupil transportation facilities make it possible for children to attend school more regularly. More-modern school plants and better trained teachers should favorably affect reading achievement as should nursery schools, kindergartens, and special classes.

Since it is generally agreed that a person's later proficiency in reading depends very largely upon the progress he experienced in reading growth

at the primary level, and since a much greater amount of time is devoted to reading instruction in the first three grades than at other levels, improved methodology likely would be most helpful in that area.

Are there better ways to teach children to read and, if so, why have we not found them? Are we spending too much time trying to defend a program that may well be ineffective, and spending too little time exploring the possibilities that may exist in a more-modern approach? The purpose of this article is to present evidence taken from The New Castle Reading Experiment, which proves beyond question that tremendous improvement in the teaching of reading has been achieved in one school because the correlated visual medium was extensively employed.

Plan Has Been Tried for Seven Years

In 1947 a long-term experimental program was instituted at the Thaddeus Stevens School in New Castle, Pa., for the purpose of thoroughly testing the correlated visual image as a medium for reading instruction at the primary level. In the six ensuing years this project has emerged as one of the most extensive and most revealing studies ever conducted in the reading field. After two years of planning, experimenting, testing, and material preparation, the program was ready for use in Grade I in September, 1949. One of the current basal reading programs was selected as a vehicle for the study. Filmstrips were prepared to accompany the readers so

there would be a frame of projected material for every lesson in the textbooks. Thus the filmstrips could be used every day of the school year. These filmstrip frames were so organized that they would introduce the lessons they accompanied in a colorful, vivid, and meaningful manner.

The New Castle Reading Experiment is unique in American education in at least one respect; namely, that it has been the only serious attempt to test the filmstrip as a teaching device in reading instruction at the primary level. This is interesting in view of the fact that it was conclusively proved in the armed services during World War II that the most powerful teaching agent, aside from the teacher, was film.

Experiments in Two Schools

The new visual program was first used in the three sections of Grade I class at the Thaddeus Stevens School in New Castle during the 1949-50 school year. The results in these classes, as measured objectively, were so out of the ordinary and so startling that they at first seemed even improbable. The various data that have been collected since that time are too extensive to include in an article. They cover the significant information for more than 300 children and are listed in 15 separate tables. These data have been rather widely distributed and discussed. A summary table for each class was published in the January, 1953 issue of *Elementary English*. While the thirteen classes that participated in this program at the Thaddeus Stevens School during the next

three years were average in ability and in readiness for reading as is shown by their test data, their reading achievement scores were out of all proportion to normal expectancy. The pattern was almost the same for each class. Many of the pupils were reading at the third grade level after their first year in school. But the most significant points in the data are the closeness of range among the scores at a very high level and the fact that there were no low scores. Everybody learned to read, regardless of his ability or readiness, and everybody enjoyed the program because it was the type of activity that appealed to a child. Pupils with IQ's as low as 75 and with readiness scores so low that it was evident they would be non-readers learned to read in one year, scored well into Grade II on standardized reading tests after their first eight months in school and continued to read successfully in Grades II and III. Parents of these children were highly complimentary of the program. During the three years not one parent of a first grade child complained of lack of progress in reading. This was quite unusual at this particular school. In previous years six or more beginning pupils were retained every year and many more were considered inadequate readers. For the 1952-53 school year the visual program was transferred to the Arthur McGill School and at Stevens, the teachers reverted to the traditional type of teaching. While the Stevens classes led all other classes in the city by a wide margin in reading achievement during the three years they employed the visual program, they

dropped in rank from first and second to 24th and 25th during the 1952-53 term. Only three classes in the city turned in poorer reading scores. At the Arthur McGill School where the new program was used during the past year the beginning pupils averaged third grade levels in their reading tests, nearly two grade levels above normal. Parents of these children expressed amazement throughout the year at the progress their children were making. Nearly all of them visited the classes and at the close of the term they were so grateful they held a party for the teacher and presented her with expensive luggage to show their appreciation for the type of work she had performed for their children. Certainly here is evidence of the need for newer methods of reading instruction and of the eagerness with which our parents await such change.

Produces Fluent, Meaningful Reading

The purpose of teaching children to read is to so prepare them that they can read a paragraph of words fluently, get the intended meaning from that paragraph, and put their own meaning into it. Apparently the incidental approach to this teaching is too abstract and too academic for the slow-learning child to grow in reading power as we would like him to do. He cannot attach meaning to the paragraph because the impressions of the words upon his mind were not interesting to him and they were not lasting. Educators have claimed for many years that the slow-learning child learns more rapidly from experiences which

are vivid, colorful, meaningful, detailed, concrete, and interesting to him. The New Castle Reading Experiment bears out these contentions. The wonder is that we have said so much about what is good for the dull child and all the while we go on teaching him from materials that are "academic" and "bookish."

Method Is Interesting

Many values seem readily apparent in the visual method as it is being used at New Castle. The projected lessons as they appear on a large screen at the front of the classroom are highly interesting to the pupil. Therefore class management is less of a problem to the teacher. The high level of interest lengthens attention spans. Since every pupil's attention is focused on a lesson that is vividly pictured there is much less need for individual pupil-teacher conference and the teacher has more time for the entire class. Reticent and dull children are encouraged to make many trips to the screen where they lead discussions thus growing in social confidence and learning from their classmates. The vividness and clarity with which the various lessons are pictured seem to impress the learning upon the minds of the learners to such an extent that there is much less need for repetition of teaching. Probably one of the most effective techniques made possible by the large projected image is the fact that duller pupils may work with their hands at the screen, pointing out, circling choices, underscoring and making associations between words and

images by drawing imaginary lines. They learn while they play.

The writer is not prepared to document the various values that may be present because of the far-point viewing made possible by the visual method. It is possible, however, that the great amount of close reading made necessary by the traditional teaching method may be damaging to the eyes of young children. The rate at which children's visual problems rise between the ages of six and ten has long been alarming to educators in the elementary area. At a recent reading conference a noted sight-saving authority and an eye specialist agreed in statements from the platform that "in our opinion many fourth grade children have to wear glasses because of the great amount of small print they were subjected to in Grade I." Both speakers also stated that most children are naturally farsighted. In view of this information a trend toward large type made possible by the projected image may be highly desirable.

A New View Toward Readiness

As measured by the rate at which we are presently expected to teach children to read we can claim success only with the upper two thirds of the class. In visiting many schools throughout the country the writer has found agreement among teachers of beginning classes that "about one-third of our pupils do not seem to progress in reading instruction."

It has always been this "one-third" with whom we have been concerned. The brighter pupils will learn to read

from most any kind of program or teacher. But those with IQ's ranging from 70 to 90 have not found success with the present program. In defense of this situation we have developed some new techniques for which we held great hopes. Two of the more prominent of these plans have been in the areas of "readiness" and "grouping." "Reading readiness" has become one of the most over-worked terms of the day. While no one questions the value of preparing the child for the reading experience, the lengths to which we have gone in evaluating readiness as a factor in reading success is alarming. In the most positive thinking regarding readiness, it is claimed that some children will need a program of pre-reading activities for a month or two after entering school, that other pupils will not be ready for the reading experience until mid-year, and that some will not benefit from actual reading instruction during the entire first year of school. This philosophy developed among us from sheer necessity. We use it to defend our inability to teach more children to read. So many children have failed to profit from reading instruction at the beginning level that we have come to the conclusion that they were not ready to read. In arriving at such conclusion, and thereby delaying the reading progress of large numbers of our children, we must be prepared to answer the criticism that "we have not blamed reading failure upon the teacher, not upon the teaching method, nor even upon reading materials, but we have blamed it upon the child himself." "He did not learn to read

because he was not ready for the reading experience." If we were to be entirely fair with these children we should, at least, say that, apparently, they were not ready to progress satisfactorily in our reading program as it presently is organized. In other words, it may well be that the program is at fault rather than the child. The New Castle Reading Experiment has proved year after year that six-year-old boys and girls are ready to learn to read if the reading experience is a visualized one. It seems sensible then, to conclude that we are spending too much time trying to make the child over so he will be more suited to find some success in a program that has little appeal for him and too little time building a program for which the child has a natural readiness.

Less Need for Grouping

As with readiness, the present concept of grouping children within a class for reading instruction grew from necessity. Dull children could not cope with the academic approach presently in use so we conceived the idea of arranging a class into three ability levels. The idea is to give each group the type of teaching and materials which we feel is best suited to that ability. This technique has certain advantages and it likely is necessary so long as we continue to use adult methods in teaching children. But we must not overlook the accompanying disadvantages. In the first place, when a teacher groups her class, her measure for evaluating each child is the reading program in its present form. The group

into which the child is placed depends upon that child's apparent readiness and ability to find success in a certain type of program. We take for granted that the program is adequate, and if the pupil does not give evidence that he is ready for such a program, *his actual reading instruction is delayed*, often for months, while he gets ready. We may be right in saying that many children are not ready to read in our present programs but are we willing to say that a program could not be developed for which the child has a natural readiness.

Some Disadvantages of Grouping

One of the most unfortunate things about our present method of grouping is the likelihood of a teacher deciding in September what the fate of some of her children will be in May. Such a situation was never intended to develop, of course, but the writer has seen it occur many, many times and it will occur in thousands of schools this year, over all our country. Here is how it happens. Certain pupils indicate upon entering school that they will need a long period of pre-reading activity. They are placed in the third (slow-learning) group. They work for a good part of the year getting ready for the reading experience and, hence, will never have a chance to progress further than a third of half-way through the readers. The result is retention except that few schools do not retain them anymore. They are placed in Grade II or level two where they continue the following year to be poor and retarded readers. In theory we say that these children may be placed in a

more advanced group when they are ready and thus the progress depends upon the child. In actual practice, however, no teacher can give adequate time to three different classes within her four walls at the same time and thus, progress of group number three is poor at best.

Another disadvantage of so much grouping is that *the heterogeneity among pupils of a given class of beginners is wider at the close of the year than it was at the beginning*. Whatever academic differences there may have been among the children in September, we increase that gap when we teach some of the pupils to read and not others. The New Castle Reading Experiment proves that this third group could have been taught to read. In the New Castle classes there were no poor readers because a program was used which appealed to the child and from which all could learn to read. Hence, there never has been a need for the third group. This made it possible to eliminate at least one-third of the disadvantages of grouping.

A great many people have visited the New Castle classes. All have been impressed with the reading achievement of each pupil. But some of the visitors have expressed concern because we were not proceeding in the accepted manner. Our answer has been that if a more successful teaching method has been discovered, why cling to antiquated methods which

have had ample time in the past twenty-five years to prove their inferiority?

With the present emphasis on child development people have asked us various questions such as the following: Are you sure it is wise to try to teach every child to read? Are there other things you might have done for some of these children which would have been more valuable to them than learning to read? Have you given proper attention to the mental health and growth of these pupils? Have you driven the slow-learner to heights he should never have been expected to attain? The New Castle experience has shown us that a child's emotional and social growth need not be thwarted as an expense of teaching him to read. On the contrary, these pupils who are experiencing success in reading growth, in a program which thoroughly delights them, *are happier and more socially confident* than they would be were they struggling along in a program unsuited to their needs and in which they could not be happy because they could not be successful.

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Experiencing Gives Meaning to Reading

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by

● MYRTLE S. DYE

HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

TENNESSEE

OFTEN THE READING readiness program is prolonged until the child's initial enthusiasm has completely disappeared. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of modern education is that we sometimes fail to maintain and capitalize on this initial enthusiasm for reading. Every first grade teacher is familiar with the child who said, "I'll give her one more day. If she doesn't teach me to read tomorrow, I'm never going back."

In order to be certain that we do not lose this initial enthusiasm for reading, an examination of the methods by which we teach reading seems wise. Of the various methods of teaching reading, the experience method offers the opportunity for the child to learn a feeling of early success. From the very first day, actual reading situations can be started when this method is used. The more formal methods, employing the use of a basal text, may delay the time when the child can have a successful reading experience. In the experience approach there is a more gradual transition from readiness activities to formal reading, if there is any transition at all. Actually, by use of the experience method, those children who are ready to read can begin immediately. Those who need more readiness can easily re-

ceive this with the experience approach.

What Is the Experience Approach?

Of the various methods of teaching reading, probably none has been given more acclaim than the experience approach. As a part of other methods, it is used by practically every teacher. The experience approach can be used to a much greater extent, however, than many teachers realize. It is much more than merely a supplementary activity, to be used along with more formal instructional methods. It can be a method within itself and, in a few instances, has been used at least through the first grade entirely.

What is meant by the experience approach to reading? The most important characteristics of this method are:

1. No basal text is used.
2. Reading is presented informally.
3. Reading materials are based on the interests and experiences of the children.
4. Early success in reading is assured.
5. The child goes from real experiences to symbols, instead of from symbols to artificial situations.

In using the experience method, the instructional materials are prepared

for the class by the teacher. There is no need to depend on a textbook, other than perhaps to help the teacher. The children help prepare all reading materials and the content of experience materials is therefore real to the children. The different levels of the children's ability and their different interests are provided for by the content of the materials prepared. On some occasions these materials may be for the entire group, while at other times they are prepared for an individual child.

The reading situation is naturally more formal where there is no dependency upon a basal text. The material is not presented in a prescribed order as it would necessarily be where a basal text was used. The groups are more flexible, sometimes being decided by interests instead of reading ability.

The major characteristic of this approach is, obviously, that the reading material is about the children themselves. In spite of great effort on the part of book publishers, it has still been impossible to prepare stories which are both meaningful and interesting to children in all parts of the country and from all socio-economic levels. The obvious solution to this problem is the experience approach where the children prepare their own materials. The stories, since they have come from the children's own experiences, can pass any test as to being understood by the children. They are naturally more interesting to the children. Because they employ a vocabulary which is very familiar to the children, they are easier to read. The

language is natural and easy quite unlike the "Oh, Look! Look! Look!" type of material found in many first readers.

Since the child has experienced the story himself, and participated in preparing it, he has an adequate readiness program for reading the material. The child therefore feels success, even if he cannot actually read the story, but can merely relate the experience as he remembers it.

The advantages of going from real experiences to symbols are obvious. By means of the experience method, the teacher encounters less difficulty teaching the child that the printed symbols represent words which, when read, tell of the experience. Where the reading material is unfamiliar, the child must go from the unfamiliar symbols to the unfamiliar story.

Children like to tell of imaginary experiences and, provided that they understand that they must make it clear to the rest of the class before they begin, that what they are telling is an imaginary story, these stories can be a lot of fun. In preparation for this type of activity the teacher might read Dr. Seuss's *And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*.

A definition of the experience approach would necessarily include many characteristics. There are, of course, many other characteristics which are common to this method of teaching reading. Basically, however, all of the characteristics are forms of enrichment which make learning to read a meaningful experience for all children.

Developing Experiences

Aside from the many experiences which the children have individually, they may also have common group experiences such as trips, excursions, parties, and television programs. When the children do these things themselves, they are called first-hand experiences. If one child has an experience and comes back and tells the rest of the class about his experience, then it would be a vicarious experience for the rest of the class. Both types of experiences are valuable to the teacher who is using the experience approach. The element of surprise, which children so thoroughly enjoy, can be introduced by a child telling only the teacher how a certain experience ended. Then when the experience story is prepared, the teacher adds the ending and the children must read to find out what happened.

While both first-hand and vicarious experiences are valuable, the first-hand experience has the greatest value. This is especially true in the early part of the reading program. By sharing common experiences, the children are being taught to observe carefully. By sharing an experience with the other children which they did not have, the child is learning the necessity of not only careful observation but also clarity of expression.

The importance of preparing for any excursion or experience cannot be over estimated. Experience charts and stories may be made before the class takes a particular trip. The purpose of this would be to prepare the children for what they will see. Certainly, if the

trip is to be to a farm, the children cannot anticipate all of the things that they will see. But if in developing the experience chart they have been prepared to look for the different animals that they will see, and the different types of farm equipment, they will be better observers and the experience will have more meaning.

It is important that the experience is not too broad. A trip to an airport, which includes visiting the hangars, airport lobby, landing field, inside of an airplane, pilot's cockpit and observing many types of planes take off and land is too broad an experience for first grade children. Providing the child with too much to see will only bewilder him and may result in his not actually remembering anything that he does see.

From a trip or excursion which is carefully planned, and not so extensive and all inclusive that the child cannot comprehend what he has seen, the children get meanings from words as they build new meanings from their first-hand experience. The pre-trip preparation will help them associate the words with the real object.

After the children have had the first hand experience, they are ready to return to the classroom and share what they have seen. Children's concepts and perceptions may be enlarged through these direct experiences. It is hoped that the final result will not be like the child who took an excursion with a group and all he could contribute about what he had seen was "sandwiches."

Of course, each day brings new experiences for children that may be

used as a basis for the preparation of experience charts and stories. Birthdays, new pets, new baby brothers and sisters, movies and television programs are experiences which are frequently overlooked by teachers as the basis for an experience story.

Preparing Experience Charts

When children have had a common experience they will want to talk about it. Sharing experiences may become known as "group talk" among the children. From this desire to talk about the experience, the teacher may suggest that she should write about it, so the whole group might read it. The children will not be required to read all the words. The story may be written on the blackboard then transferred by the teacher to lined chart paper.

Most teachers are familiar with the making of charts. Numerous helpful suggestions are made by Lamoreaux and Lee in *Learning to Read Through Experience*. The charts should be illustrated with pictures, either cut out, drawn by the teacher, or illustrated by the children themselves. At first the story should be short, consisting of only two or three simple sentences. There should be a title or name for each chart, about three inches from the top and about the same distance from the first line. The lines should be about three inches apart and the different words about one inch apart. They may be written in manuscript writing with printing ink and a lettering pen or large crayon. The charts may be made twice, the second one may be cut and divided into sen-

tences and later on into phrases and word strips.

The usual steps in the making of a chart are:

1. The children have a common experience.
2. They discuss the experience and clarify their ideas about it.
3. The teacher notes the common concepts of the group.
4. The teacher records on the board some of these common concepts.
5. The teacher prints the chart twice.
6. The children read the chart as a whole, then by parts, matching sentences or words and reassembling the parts. Finally they read it as a whole again.
7. The chart is filed with others for future reference and reviews occasionally.

In order to make the chart more meaningful, objects written about may actually be attached to the chart and kept at school to become a permanent part of the story.

One advantage of the experience charts is the tie up between the school and the home. Children writing about a pet, baby sister or toy will actually see that they will be brought and shown to the group. In writing about a child named Judy's new baby sister, the chart was illustrated by one of the children and the baby drawn had on a pink dress. When the mother brought the baby to visit and to show her to the children in the room she had her dressed in a pink dress. Imagine how pleased the children were and how easy it was for the children

to remember an otherwise hard word, "pink".

Experience charts and stories have their place all through the grades, even into high school. They may be used in such forms as these:

1. The log of activities in social studies.
2. Objectives for various subjects, room procedure, and standards of performance of work.
3. Steps of an experiment in science.
4. Vocabulary lists.
5. Goals to be attained in any particular subject.
6. Current events, newspaper items, and special community happenings.

Evaluation of the Experience Approach

Most teachers use the experience approach as a part of their reading program. Only in a few isolated areas is it used exclusively. There are many reasons for this. The major advantages and disadvantages are the following:

Advantages:

1. Materials are available at a minimum of expense on all levels and of a wide variety. To the teacher who complains that she does not have enough funds to buy the necessary reading material, the experience approach is the answer.
2. The child can experience early success in reading interesting and yet simple material. Because the experiences are meaningful to him, and yet of a very

easy nature, he may begin reading immediately, upon entering the first grade.

3. The child learns early to share his experiences with other children. By developing this attitude of sharing, as well as one of listening, the child can be a more active member of the group than he would in a more formal classroom situation.
4. The child develops ability to observe and report to the class about his own experiences.
5. The child's basic vocabulary is developed through his experience, rather than from a list of words which may or may not be part of his experience.
6. It is easier to include parents in a reading program employing the experience method. Also, since parents can understand that the material is being developed in the class, they are less concerned about what level, or what book, Johnny is reading from.

Disadvantages:

1. There is danger that the reading vocabulary which the child learns will not be well enough controlled so that he remembers many of the words he learns. Too many new words may be presented, without there being ample repetition of the words already learned.
2. Reading from books may be delayed and a problem might be encountered in the transition from the experience chart and story to books.

3. Too much time might be spent in developing an experience so that there is not enough time for actual instruction in reading about the experience.
4. Because of the lack of formality, it is difficult for an inexperienced teacher. In the experience method there can be no formal guide as the teacher's manual which accompanies the basal text.

While in some situations the disadvantages may completely outweigh the advantages, there are other situations where the experience approach would be the best method. Each teacher must decide for herself which method she wants to use. The effectiveness of any method will depend mainly upon how well the teacher knows her children and puts into practice her understanding of individual differences. The experience method, while it may involve far more planning on the part of the teacher, could well be the answer for many teachers.

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What Research Has to Say In Content Areas

(Continued from page 72)

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The Problem of Identification In Learning to Read

by BRENDA LANSDOWN
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BOOKS AND ARTICLES on the problem of learning to read, all emphasize that the child must recognize his own *experience*, be able to *identify* with the pictures and story, and *associate* word form, sound and meaning to build a sight vocabulary. Nowhere does one find writers who step into the skin of a Negro child and gaze at the carefully prepared commercial primer-reader series from his vantage point. Where is the *experience* of a Negro or Puerto Rican six-year-old in the background of Judy or Dick? With which pale picture could he possibly *identify*? Where is the *association* between the stilted speech of "Here comes our community helper" boldly typed under the policeman, whereas the child bred in ghetto conditions usually issues to his companions the scattering cry of "Chicky! The cops!" when one of the "finest" enters his street?

Has any writer sat in the clothes of a child from one of our millions of tenements and considered pronouncing the word, "Home," which is printed beneath a detached, one-family ranch-type house surrounded by a garden and picket fence? Or realized that the word which comes to mind under the blue suited gentleman returning in the evening to an ideal kitchen is "boss" not "father"? His Dad, dressed in workclothes, probably drops into bed in the morning after a five-day ab-

sence driving an interstate truck route!

Disparity Affects Reading Achievement

Is there any evidence that this disparity between pedagogic principle and available material has an effect on the reading achievement of our children? There is the uncomfortable fact that children of Negro ancestry and children of low-socio-economic groups average two to five years below the national norms in reading achievement. Nor can we absolve ourselves by inventing a Reading Index (dividing the child's reading achievement by his IQ) and saying that he is "reading up to ability" if we stop to reflect that IQ tests have to be *read* to be answered. To accept the "up to ability" hypothesis means to posit a lower potential for children of Negroes and workers for which there is not a shade of support from sociological or anthropological studies.

In applying our principles of learning to read, it is clear that we violate them with regard to a large proportion of our nation's children. Do the children themselves react consciously to these violations? One has only to ask Negro mothers and the anecdotes come pouring: "Sammy turns the pages of any book I give him saying, 'Where am I, Mommy?' Maybe he finds an olive skinned child (identified

as an Italian in the text); here he stops to ask, "Me?" The first grader who beseeches his mother to put "clorox" in his bath so that he can live in "one of those nice houses" is, sadly, not uncommon. Or the college student who still recalls being ashamed of the word, "home," in the reader because of the disparity between her railroad apartment and the primer portrait.

To complete the argument, can we say that a change of material has any beneficial effect? Anyone who has tried has found it has. Student teachers in my methods courses, for example, each has to tutor a child retarded in reading. They keep anecdotal records of the sessions; these supply poignant incidents. When a non-reading nine-year-old Negro boy was shown animal pictures he was still unwilling to tell about them, but once a photograph of Willy Mays was put before him, there was an immediate fluent recital of pitching and batting prowess. The student took this down, typed it up in short phrases on a primer typewriter and pasted the picture above the story. The child at once set to work to read his own story, was willing to match sentences, dissect words, and soon announced that he had a "show and tell" for the whole class.

Illustrations Readily Available

We may not be able to control the primer situation immediately but much of the early learning to read is in response to pictures brought in and exhibited about the room. One can go into any number of otherwise excel-

lent classrooms and find not a single picture illustrating the life of the children in the room! One sometimes wonders why children themselves fail to bring in pictures with which they can identify themselves. An answer is found in the child who was shown a copy of "Ebony" magazine said, "My Grandma has that." When the student said, "Why didn't you bring in pictures from it when the teacher asked for clippings?" the child replied simply, "I thought a Black Man was a no-good picture." Thus pathetically we set standards for the next generation. This suggests an area where parents individually, and P.T.A.'s collectively, can help their children learn to read; they can give the children pictures which show a cross section of American families and homes, and encourage them to show these at school. Clippings may be found in the Negro press, colorful ads from quality magazines often show men in overalls with children, newspaper photos have kitchens from real instead of ideal homes, some national advertisers prepare special pictures for exhibiting their ware in segregated housing areas.

As to the primer-reader series, not one of which in the whole nation represents urban life, nor minority groups, nor the *modus vivendi* of a worker's family. We can perhaps hope for a partial remedy since the Supreme Court Decision of May 17th of this year. Hitherto, the publishers complained that readers showing Negro and white children together would not sell below the Mason-Dixon Line. Now, they should be NEEDED. Foundations up to the present, have

turned down requests for money to launch a series of primers which would show a fairer cross-section of American life . . . even those foundations devoted to education or to intercultural relations!

Problem of All Minority Groups

However, the lack of identification for Negro children is the problem for an important minority. The problem for the majority is not touched by the anti-segregation decision: that of the urban, non-middle class child. There are more school systems in the urban than in the suburban areas; more children belong to worker families than to middle class professionals; the absence of identification here is not fully answered by the profit motive, unless it is that suburban school systems are richer and spend more money on text books. Even so, the fact that so many of our children do not reach an adequate level of reading competence cannot fail to concern the nation as a whole. This may be the historical moment to make several basic changes and to encourage our publishers to put out books which offer identification to a wider cross-section of the American people.

While there is no intention of claiming that the above thesis offers a panacea, it suggests that by taking seriously into account the fact that a majority of our children cannot identify with the "white-middle-class-suburban" readers, we could prevent or cure a major percentage of reading failures for those children who enter

the school systems without severe emotional handicaps.

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Board Plans Four Meetings

At the fall meeting of the officers and board of directors of I. C. I. R. I. in New York City on October 30, four meetings were authorized. The Council will have reading conferences at both the St. Louis and Cleveland regional meetings of A. A. S. A. The conference at St. Louis is scheduled for February 28, 1955, and the one at Cleveland for April 4, 1955.

This year, for the first time, the Council will have a meeting at the convention of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development at Chicago on March 6, 1955. A breakfast get-together is being planned for the affair.

No date was set for the annual Assembly of I. C. I. R. I. which will be held in Pittsburgh the early part of next May.

The programs for these conferences are being organized by a committee headed by Dr. William S. Gray, of the University of Chicago. The details of each of the programs will appear in a later issue of THE READING TEACHER.

The following attended the meeting: Margaret A. Robinson, Dr. Paul Witty, Dr. William S. Gray, Dr. Emmett A. Betts, Dr. Albert J. Harris, Dr. Donald L. Cleland, Dr. Ruth Strang, Dr. LaVerne Strong, Nancy Larrick, H. Alan Robinson, and Dr. J. Allen Figurel, either as board members or chairmen of committees.

WHAT RESEARCH SAYS TO THE TEACHER OF READING

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COMPREHENSION

IT SEEMS trite to state that the end result of all reading is comprehension. Yet isolated examples reveal that some teachers become so involved in the "means to the end", that they lose sight of the final goal. Assuming that we may all agree that comprehension is essential, we may consider several crucial questions. What is the nature of the process of comprehension? What are its components? How and when does this reading skill develop? What means do we have for evaluating comprehension?

The remainder of this paper will consider briefly each of the questions listed above.

The Nature of Comprehension

The dictionary defines comprehension as the ability to grasp meaning or to understand. Durrell¹ suggests that it is the ability to translate printed symbols into images, ideas, emotions, plans, and action. Others might add the ability to evaluate for accuracy and bias.

Research in this area has been limited by inadequate techniques to explore the process. As early as 1917,

Thorndike² concluded that reasoning was important to understanding the printed page. Subsequent research has agreed that reasoning is essential. It has also suggested that comprehension requires active participation on the part of the reader. Furthermore, comprehension is enhanced by the fund of information and experience which the reader brings to the printed page.

A number of peripheral studies have explored isolated factors which influence comprehension. For example, intelligence, attitude, interest, and purpose have been shown to be related, but no single factor describes the process *per se*.

Some recent attempts to explore the process of comprehension have used retrospective verbalization. An example is the study by Piekarz³ who recorded the oral responses of superior Grade VI pupils as they reread, and answered questions about, a selection. The analysis of the transcribed recordings afforded some new insights, and suggested that this technique offers promise for further studies into the nature of comprehension. It is quite likely that techniques for research in this area will be expanded rapidly in the near future.

¹Donald D. Durrell, *Reading in the Elementary School*, p. 194, *The Forty-Eighth Yearbook, Part II*, National Society for the Study of Education, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

²Edward L. Thorndike, "Reading as Reasoning: A Study of Mistakes in Paragraph Reading," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, VIII, (June, 1917), 323-32.

³Josephine A. Piekarz, "Individual Differences in Interpretive Responses in Reading." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954.

The Components of Comprehension

Some research has produced evidence that reading comprehension is a unitary or single trait which does not lend itself to separation. Other studies, such as that of Davis⁴, identify as many as nine separate components. Briefly, they were: word knowledge (ability to recognize words and know their meanings); reasoning in reading; understanding the writer's explicit statements; ability to identify the writer's intent, purpose, and point of view; ability to select word meanings from context; the grasp of detailed statements; following the organization of a passage; knowledge of literary devices and techniques; and the ability to select the main thought of a passage. Davis identified this array of abilities through the use of a statistical device called factor analysis. Many others have used the same technique, often based on the results of different tests, and have identified fewer factors. It is significant that the greatest number of the factor studies have been done at the college level. Here the process of comprehension should be more highly developed so that it may appear to be a single ability. In the earlier stages, where skills are maturing, it may be possible to identify separate components.

While the components of comprehension are being studied further, teachers can successfully develop many aspects of comprehension through direct instruction.

How and When Comprehension Develops

Studies of reading readiness reveal that children comprehend spoken language before they begin to read. In the initial stages of learning to read, the teacher who places emphasis on reading as a means of getting ideas and information lays a solid foundation for growth in this area. Proficiency in word recognition which is gained in the early school years enables the pupil to give increased attention to meaning. A thoughtful attitude toward reading may be developed from experiences (either real or vicarious), through oral discussions, and by setting the purpose. One means is to use carefully formulated questions. Holmes⁵ found that students comprehended more, and remembered better what was read when guiding questions were given as a part of the assignment.

In general, children develop skill in answering the kinds of questions posed. Therefore, the teacher who wishes to insure growth in all aspects of comprehension should not rely on factual questions alone. Questions answered directly in the text are easy to formulate and to score, but those calling for the main idea, conclusions, implications and evaluation, must also be used.

Research has also revealed that children do not reach maturity in comprehension of what is read by the end of the elementary school. Studies show clearly that with carefully

⁴Frederick B. Davis, "Fundamental Factors of Comprehension in Reading", *Psychometrika*, IX (September, 1944), 185-97.

⁵Eleanor Holmes, "Reading Guided by Questions versus Careful Reading and Rereading Without Questions", *School Review*, XXXIX, (May, 1931), 361-71.

planned instruction, students develop increased power of comprehension throughout the secondary school, and during the early college years. The implication is that comprehension begins before school entrance and that every teacher is responsible for building systematically upon the foundation.

Furthermore, surveys of achievement reveal a wide range in comprehension at any given level in school. The individual differences in this area are as great as in any academic or personal ability. This finding implies that the teacher must be prepared to begin where each student is in comprehension and direct his growth in harmony with his potentiality. Teachers may anticipate individual differences among students in rate of growth, and in the final level of attainment.

Evaluating Comprehension

Comprehension may be evaluated by the answers to questions, by solving problems, by oral discussions, or in many instances by less direct means. Many teachers have come to depend upon the results of standardized tests. Careful appraisal of the questions reveal that factual information is strongly emphasized. An analysis of the standardized reading tests commonly used in the elementary schools was made by Traxler.⁶ He concluded that the skills appearing

most frequently in the tests represent a good starting point in analysis of interpretation. The implication is clear that until standardized tests include the broader and more complex comprehension skills, elementary teachers must depend on less formal techniques of evaluation. Even at the secondary and college levels, care must be exercised in selecting a test which will evaluate the many facets of comprehension.

One of the difficulties in this area of evaluation is the inconclusive evidence concerning the components of comprehension, discussed earlier in this paper. While further explorations and refinements are being made, teachers should use standardized tests with full regard for their values and limitations. In addition, the ability of each individual to comprehend may be constantly appraised as he carries on his usual activities.

Concluding Statement

The complexity of our society demands, as never before, that readers understand the printed page. They must comprehend the literal meaning, but must also be able to read between the lines, derive inferences, evaluate, accept and reject ideas presented, and use the information gained to improve personal and social affairs. The need is urgent for greater insights into many aspects of comprehension of the printed page, but teachers, who are on the frontier of education, must continue to accept the challenge to use all that is now known in this area.

⁶Arthur E. Traxler, "Critical Survey of Tests for Identifying Difficulties in Interpreting What is Read" in *Promoting Growth toward Maturity in Interpreting What is Read*, William S. Gray, Editor, p. 195-200. Supplementary Monographs, No. 74. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

WHAT OTHER MAGAZINES ARE SAYING ABOUT READING

MURIEL POTTER

MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE

"Pupil Preference for Titles and Stories in Basal Readers for Intermediate Grades." Margaret L. Droney, Stella M. Cucchiara, Alice M. Scipione. *Journal of Educational Research*, December 1953.

The experimenters presented for comment by fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children the titles and stories in five basal reader series. From the responses they concluded that in these five series there are many titles and stories appealing to children, but that some unpopular ones are also included. They suggest the submission of titles in readers to children before the publication of such readers, in order to avoid inclusion of unpopular ones. They suggest also the elimination of titles which contain the name of a feminine character, because such titles are rejected by boys, although the stories themselves may have interest factors appealing to boys. Titles containing meaningless, strange, and foreign words should also be revised.

"Summary of Reading Investigations, July 1, 1952 to June 30, 1953." William S. Gray. *Journal of Educational Research*, February, 1954.

This summary, which appears each year, is of value to all interested in the reading field. Dr. Gray organizes his summary topically, and provides a long and valuable bibliography.

"Reading Abilities: Averages and Deviations." Emmett Albert Betts. *Education*, January, 1954.

This article briefly sums up what is known from research about sex differences in reading achievement, ranges of reading ability, and individual needs of child readers. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between recognition of individual differences and successful teaching.

"Reading Number," *Education*, May 1954.

This periodical issue contains articles by ten specialists in the field. Leland B. Jacobs discusses means by which the teacher guides children toward enjoyment and appreciation of literature.

William S. Gray discusses changes in the concept of reading over the past half-century, and points out that this change has resulted in coordinated longitudinal and cross-sectional reading programs in the schools. Specific reading skills have been identified as common to the reading required in the many different curriculum areas. Programs of basic instruction in reading have developed, for which Dr. Gray states five comprehensive goals. He next lists under four headings the attitudes and skills required for the actual reading process. After a brief comment on the importance of con-

tent in basic reading instruction, he considers the problems presented in teaching efficient reading in curriculum areas. Noteworthy is his statement that while some transfer of training occurs, as from reading arithmetic to reading science problems, the skills for reading different kinds of material must be developed specifically, — a good reader of one kind of material is not necessarily a good reader of other kinds.

Gertrude Hildreth writes on "Some Principles of Learning Applied to Reading." She stresses the importance of learning by association, of habit formation, of an active approach by the learner, of perception, of motivation, of background and experience, and of differences in learning rates. Her comments on the function of practice in reading are important.

Gertrude Whipple discusses "Reading in an Integrated Language Arts Program," giving many specific suggestions for this integration.

Elona Sochor writes on "Readiness and the Development of Reading Ability at All School Levels," a brief but comprehensive article.

A. Sterl Artley's "Principles Applying to the Teaching of Word Perception" speaks clearly and to the point on what are effective methods of teaching this skill. Lester A. Wheeler provides a check list of symptoms of emotional upset in reading behavior, and a list of suggestions for the teacher who must deal with these emotional manifestations.

James L. Hymes, Jr., points out the relation between *learning* and *learning to read*. Finally Emmett Al-

bert Betts, editor of this issue of *Education*, summarizes by discussing reading interests for the different age levels, and presents suggestions for good teaching.

Several excellent articles not directly related to reading instruction are also included.

"Improving Reading with Script Text." Gertrude Hildreth. *Elementary School Journal*, March 1953.

Dr. Hildreth begins her article with a brief history of the use of script text — manuscript writing. Developed in experimental and laboratory schools, it is now in use in all grades of the elementary school, and has been influential in the development of new methods in the teaching of both reading and writing.

While script text is generally known and used as an introduction to book reading, it is less often utilized after children have begun to read printed materials. It seems to be imperfectly understood that reading from script text is reading quite as useful as reading print. Handmade reading materials are very useful so long as teachers do not re-use them with a group until they have been memorized. Script text can be used to teach beginning reading not only before books, but along with books. It can become, says Dr. Hildreth, "a bridge to the first textbooks and maintain a link between the reading textbooks and life experience." Charts can be used to develop good eye movement habits and to increase children's sight vocabulary, and the most effective and economical type of lettering for charts is script text.

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Naturally, the total vocabulary of a month's experience charts will exceed the vocabulary of a corresponding amount of text in a reader, because charts are used in recording changing experiences in the classroom. But provided that new words are not met in too rapid succession, they can be acquired readily because charts record recent, meaningful experience, with the range of vocabulary expanding especially through nouns. However, other types of reading material, such as poems, parts of a play, directions, or a recipe, may also profitably be presented on charts. Manuscript writing should be used for all blackboard and other handmade text that children are expected to read in the lower grades, because it provides not only legible reading material but patterns for good writing.

Dr. Hildreth discusses next the psychological values of the use of script text. She emphasizes particularly the child's experience in seeing language recorded by the teacher's writing on the blackboard, and his consequent motivation to write about his own experiences and to record his own ideas. In primary grades chart and blackboard materials also provide physical and psychological relief by means of opportunities for change of visual focus, and relief of eye fatigue. They also provide a means of centering the attention of the group, and permit children to use large muscles in moving up to point to words or illustrations.

Script text may also be used for linking unit studies and text reading in the upper primary and intermediate

grades. Teacher-made materials may be duplicated and distributed so that each child has a copy. Special materials may be provided for slower readers without revealing the grade level of the material. In the teaching of the handicapped, special material may be prepared to meet the needs of a single child or a small group.

This article called to the reviewer's attention how much we take script text and manuscript writing for granted, and how recent an innovation this type of letter actually is.

"Teaching Reading — an Interpretation for Parents." George R. Reynolds. *NEA Journal*, September 1954.

Mr. Reynolds, principal of a school in Great Neck, N. Y., stresses the importance of success in beginning reading. He points out that the "sight vocabulary" obtained by recognizing words by general configuration is the means by which a child finds himself able to read the pre-primer successfully. The old alphabetic method postponed this reading success by requiring a far higher mental age for beginning reading, and the postponement for many months of the moment when meaning could be obtained from reading, and success experienced. Mr. Reynolds reminds the reader that in one American city 50 years ago 60 per cent of first graders failed one or more times. This is an excellent point to remember when reference is made to the good old days when all children learned to read in first grade.

The modern reading program is successful when it is meaningful, Mr. Reynolds continues. Meaning is em-

phasized by the use of pictures, by discussion and organization of ideas obtained from reading, and through evaluation of experience obtained through reading. Emphasis is not on the amount of reading material covered, but on understanding what is read. Emphasis on meaning leads to the skill of word identification from context — "guessing" — i.e., recognizing words through the necessity for making sense in a sentence.

Structural analysis is introduced early through recognition of compound words made up of parts already familiar to the child. Endings and beginnings are soon as familiar as the root words to which they are attached. The phonics program also begins early, with initial consonant sounds and blends. The explanation of the aims and methods of the phonics program is brief but adequate.

The remainder of the article describes readiness, particularly in respect to experience with words and with the environment. Some few good do's and don'ts conclude. Such an article would be an excellent one to place in the hands of all parents of children entering first grade.

"Reading About Emotions in the Primary Classroom." Bernice J. Wolfson. *Elementary English*, March 1954.

This article contains an annotated bibliography, with some suggestions as to how the stories may be used. It describes the values for children of reading such material. There is also a list of references for the teacher.

"Effect of Slanted Text Upon the Readability of Print." Miles A. Tin-

ker. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, May 1954.

This experimental study examined differences in legibility resulting from attempts to read printed material held at different angles to the eye. The problem arose out of a consideration of the fact that in many large heavy books the pages do not lie flat, or parallel to the horizontal table surface. When parts of a line are at varying distances from the eyes, speed of reading is retarded as the slant increases, and visibility of word forms is reduced. This provides experimental evidence for encouraging children to hold reading materials "properly" and not at unusual angles. It is also suggested by the experimenter that large books and journals be printed with a wide inner margin.

"An Evaluation of the Tachistoscope in Reading Improvement Programs." Roy E. Sommerfeld. *In What Colleges are Doing in Reading Improvement Programs*. Texas Christian University Press, February 1954.

This excellent review of the research on the values of tachistoscopic training as a means of improving reading skills at all levels, examines the methods and conclusions of a large number of research studies and points out that a number of their conclusions are not supported by the evidence. Mr. Sommerfeld believes that improvement attributed to the use of the tachistoscope in its various forms, as found on the market today, is actually "the result of certain secondary factors which are not inherent to the method" (p. 20). Probably courses

in reading improvement which use machinery and gadgets, of which there are many, improve the interest and motivation of the learner, and so improve his capacity to learn. Sommerfeld says "the motivation which is associated with almost any method that is tried may account for the resulting improvement as much as the method itself." The reviewer, with less evidence, used to state the same conclusion to her students as "Any method is better than no method." A fine bibliography follows this article.

"Evaluation of Methods and Devices to Improve Reading Rate and Comprehension." Paul Witty. *Elementary English*, May 1954.

Dr. Witty's article, after raising the questions implicit in the title, begins with an historical survey of the development of reading improvement programs. Relationships were experimentally uncovered between eye movements and readiness efficiency, and since there is a positive relationship between efficient reading and rapid reading, a number of instruments for exposing reading materials at controlled rates have been used to give practice in "accelerated reading". This training has been introduced after basic skills have been mastered, and particularly for the improvement of reading speed of adults. There has recently been an increasing demand for such programs to improve the reading speed of adults in colleges, in business, and in the professions.

However, such programs often work toward speed as an end in itself, instead of toward adjustment of speed

to the different purposes and needs for which reading is employed. Dr. Witty emphasizes "the importance of interest, difficulty of material, and familiarity with the concepts presented, as factors affecting both rate and comprehension," and quotes other investigators who hold the same point of view.

Dr. Witty re-examines the experimental evidence and finds that a number of studies have uncovered relationships not so simple as the original simplification that *good readers are fast readers*. All teachers know from experience that *fast readers are not necessarily good readers*. New studies show relationships of greater complexity, involving the reader's capacity, the purposes of reading, the difficulty of the material read, and the nature of the material read. In a study

of a program of reading improvement carried on in the Navy by means of a machine to control the exposure of reading materials, there were no significant differences in improvement found when one group used a rate controlling machine and the other group had instruction in vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Dr. Witty suggests that the motivating effect of using a rate controller may be of value in the high school and college. He stresses, however, that practice in improving reading speed is not the essence of a reading improvement program, which instead should include a diagnostic study of each student, a variety of reading materials and experiences, and time and instruction for developing needed reading skills.

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND THE TEACHING OF READING

**Where to Get Children's Books
For Book Fairs and Exhibits**

—NANCY LARRICK—

EDUCATION DIRECTOR
RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

"But we want to *see* the books before we purchase them!"

That very reasonable plea is heard in nearly every school. In larger cities this can be arranged through local booksellers; but in smaller communities where there is no bookseller with a large stock of children's books, the problem seems insurmountable at first.

However, there are two very cooperative sources from which local schools and libraries can borrow books for fairs and exhibits. One has been developed for the special purpose of exhibiting books in areas where they would not otherwise be seen. The other is the natural outgrowth of our system of distribution by jobber.

State Traveling Exhibits

Twenty-nine states have traveling exhibits of children's books which are furnished by the publishers to some central state office for distribution on request throughout that state. These states are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina,

North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

In many of these states, the traveling exhibit is handled through the State Library Commission. In others it is handled through the State Department of Education. Since both of those state departments are usually housed in the main offices of the state capitol, they work together very closely and are quick to refer letters to the proper official. Bookings for exhibit must be made well in advance, of course.

Dealers Supplying Exhibits

In addition, the Children's Book Council has prepared a list of forty or more dealers who are prepared to supply children's books for exhibits. Some of them send books anywhere in the United States; other limit their consignments to one particular region or a single state.

Some of these dealers send a salesman with the exhibit so that he can assist in selling books to the school and perhaps to parents at a PTA book fair. Others do not send a salesman, but will let the school officials take orders for books. Frequently the school is expected to pay transportation charges, at least one way.

Complete information about these loan exhibits from dealers may be obtained by writing to the Children's Book Council, 50 W. 53rd Street, New York 19, N. Y.

How to Run a Book Fair or Exhibit

In addition there are very helpful materials giving suggestions on how to run a book fair. One is the manual entitled "Book Bazaars" which is published by Scholastic Magazines, 33 W. 42nd St., New York 36. (Price 25 cents.)

"How to Run a Book Fair" by Dorothy McFadden is available from

the Children's Book Council, 50 W. 53rd St., New York 19. (Price \$1.50.)

A workbook on how to plan and put on a book fair, together with a kit of promotional materials, is available from the *New York Herald Tribune*, 230 W. 41st St., New York 36. (Price: 30 cents east of the Mississippi; 40 cents west of the Mississippi; 50 cents in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.)

Next issue: Reading in the Content Areas.

News of Local Councils

The Brooklyn Council, Brooklyn, New York, had as its speaker for their October meeting Miss Nancy Larrick, former editor of *THE READING TEACHER* and Education Director of Random House Children's Books. Following a late afternoon tea, Miss Larrick spoke on the topic "Enrich Your Teaching with Children's Books." The council plans to rotate future meetings among the various district centers, thus giving parents and others, who might find travelling difficult to this center, the opportunity to attend.

The Milwaukee Area Council, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, held its first meeting last March when seventeen members attended a dinner and informal discussion on "How Do You Select Your Reading Students" and "Vocabulary." In May, after another dinner meeting, the group held an informal panel discussion on "What Word Analysis Skills Do You Teach Your

Local Councils are urged to send news of their meetings and plans for the future to Miss Josephine Tronsberg, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania, who is Local Council Editor.

• • •

Students Who Are Beyond the Word Recognition Stage" and "Spelling Techniques." At a recent meeting this fall, the topic discussed was "Reading and Visual Tests and What They Should Measure." The council now has twenty-eight members and plans to keep the meetings informal as expressed by the will of the group.

The North Jersey Council, Somerset County, held a dinner meeting in April at which Dr. Frances Giligan of Jersey City State Teachers College was the speaker. Sixty teachers attended this meeting. Dr. Karp, director of the Paterson State Teachers College Reading Clinic was the guest speaker for the November meeting.

The Indiana State Teachers Col-

lege, Indiana, Pennsylvania, sponsored a dinner meeting in September. The dinner prepared and served by Home Economics students in the Home Economics Rooms on the Campus was attended by more than a hundred "inservice" teachers and friends. The program featured two speakers. Dr. Ralph E. Heiges, dean of instruction at the College, who attended the University of Texas during a recent sabbatical leave, talked about conditions and activities in Texas from an educator's view. Dr. Willis E. Pratt, president of the College, discussed the merits and fallibilities of intelligence and achievement tests. The program was delightfully varied with musical numbers provided by students from the music department.

The newly formed Bronx Council,

New York City, has one hundred members. Their main purpose is to improve the reading instruction in the Bronx, which is composed of ten New York City school districts. At their first meeting this fall, the council members had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Albert J. Harris discuss "New Trends in Reading Instruction." For future meetings, members have been asked to send in their requests as to the type of reading topics they would like to have discussed.

The Columbus Reading Council began the second year of its organization with a meeting at which Dr. Virginia Sanderson, professor in the Bureau of Special and Adult Education at Ohio State University spoke on "Sound Approach to the Problem of Remedial Reading." Dr. Sanderson showed

New in Reading . . .

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A picture dictionary for first-graders

There are 639 listings, including the entire first-year vocabulary of *The New Alice and Jerry Basic Readers*. This basic vocabulary is expanded in numerous instances to include simple *s* forms. In addition, the authors have included certain other words commonly found in the speaking vocabulary of children who read at a first-grade level.

Supplementing the dictionary proper are a three-page alphabet section, illustrating all the letters of the alphabet, and a five-page number dictionary containing all the numbers to 20.

Although this is first of all a functional book, the teacher will also find it useful as a picture-story book for beginning readers.

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slides of her work with the teaching of sound.

The Ottawa Council, Ottawa, Ontario, held its first meeting in October with Mr. Beattie of Carleton College as the guest speaker. His topic was "Problems in Reading for the Student of Literature."

Arizona Council, Tempe, Arizona, opened their fall meeting with a panel discussion on the subject of "How Can Parents Help in the Reading Program?" Dr. Betty Jean Humphrey, director of the Reading Clinic at Arizona State College, was the moderator for the panel, which included a primary supervisor, a principal, a teacher of the intermediate grades from the Training School of the College, and two parents.

The Western Michigan College Council, Michigan, has a dinner meeting preceding the program every month. In September, a workshop in preparation for a reading conference was held. This meeting was followed in October by a round table discussion of the "Aims, Materials and Procedures for the Modern Teacher of Reading." The highlight of their November meeting was a reading demonstration and conference conducted by Dr. Emmett A. Betts.

The Texas Southern University Council, Houston, Texas, during the past year, held lectures, discussions and demonstrations on "Methods and Techniques for Developing Rapid Reading Ability," "Using Supplementary Reading Materials to Broaden Concepts in the Social Studies," "Creative Writing," and a review of "Uncle

Remus for Today's Children" (*Elementary English*, December 1953). During the Language Arts Conference, which the council sponsored through the cooperation of the Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading, they enjoyed the services of Mrs. Lillian Gray, Dr. Ralph Staiger, Dr. Emery Bleismer and Bill Martin, Winston Publishing Company consultants.

The Southeastern State College Reading Council, Durant, Oklahoma, was organized during the past summer and held its first meeting in September. General problems in reading instruction and individualized methods of teaching reading were discussed. Problems of classroom teachers, how to meet these problems, and how to increase reading efficiency will be considered by the group at future meetings. Fifty members are affiliated with the local council, which is the first college council in Oklahoma.

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council sponsored the luncheon meeting of the annual Reading Conference held at the University of Pittsburgh this past summer. Miss Eleanor Johnson, editor-in-chief of Charles E. Merrill Books and managing editor of "My Weekly Reader," gave a very inspiring talk on "A Planned Literature Reading Program for the Elementary School." The Tenth Annual Reading Conference was directed by Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam, past president of I.C.I.R.I. Plans have not been completed for a meeting at which Mr. William Martin from the Winston Publishing Company will be the guest speaker.

LOCAL COUNCILS

Allentown Council, Pennsylvania	Kingston Council No. 4, Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Appalachian Council, Boone, North Carolina	Kingwood Council, West Virginia
Arizona Council, Tempe, Arizona	Lancaster Council, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Berks County Council, Reading, Pennsylvania	Leon County Council, Florida
Bronx Council, Bronx, New York	Long Island Council, New York
Brooklyn Council, Brooklyn, New York	Magnolia Council, Mississippi
Calhoun County Council, South Carolina	Manhattan Council, New York
Capital Reading Council No. 5, Washington, D. C.	Mesa Reading Council, Arizona
Central New Jersey Council	Midwest City Council, Oklahoma
Chicago Area Council, Chicago, Illinois	Milwaukee Area Council, Wisconsin
Clyde Park Council, Montana	Mohawk Valley Council No. 3, New York
Columbus Reading Council, Ohio	Niagara Council No. 2, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
Dade County Council, Florida	North Jersey Council, New Jersey
Dallas Council, Texas	Orange Belt, California
El Dorado Council, Arkansas	Orangeburg Council, South Carolina
Fruitland Council, Washington	Ottawa, Ontario Council, Canada
Hamilton County Council, Chattanooga, Tennessee	Painesville City Reading Council, Ohio
Indiana State Teachers College Council, Indiana, Pennsylvania	Queen Anne's Council, Maryland
Iowa State Teachers College Council, Cedar Falls, Iowa	Queensborough Council, New York
Kanawha Council, West Virginia	Sioux City Council, Iowa
Kennewick Schools Council, Washington	Spokane Council, Washington
Kent State University Council, Kent, Ohio	San Gabriel, California
Kern County Local Council, Bakersfield, California	Suffolk Council, New York
	Texas Southern Council, Texas
	Toronto Council No. 1, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
	Westchester Reading Council, New York
	Western Michigan College Council, Michigan
	Gerald A. Yoakam Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Names and addresses of the presidents of the LOCAL COUNCILS may be secured by writing to Dr. Donald L. Cleland, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania.

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